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Golden tales of our
America

CENTRAL

GOLDEN TALES OF OUR AMERICA

STORIES OF OUR BACKGROUND AND TRADITION

Selected

With an Introduction

By

MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

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SANTA ROSA, CALIF.

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD & COMPANY
1929

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MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

47989

INTRODUCING THE STORIES

American literature—and, for that matter, American life in general—is continually receiving the treatment that the American daughter would extend to the family living room, could she have all her will as she approaches twenty: that is, a clean sweep into attic or dustbin of everything that does not express the bright spirit of the present. Fiction or furniture, little is carried over from one generation, even from one decade, into another; and if our future has few heirlooms, it will be partly because nothing can grow old that is not permitted to survive being old-fashioned.

The stories in this collection are all of an America that is no more. To put it more precisely, they are concerned with aspects of life no longer to be found in the United States of to-day, save in such remoter regions as are yet pockets of yesterday. The prairie no longer blossoms before the plough, as in Judge Hall's "The Emigrants," and the last antelope is gone from the ranges described by Mary Austin; Edward Eggleston's spelling matches, impassioned sport of the forties, survive only for the occasional entertainment of the sophisticated. Our schoolboys no longer bar out the master to win a holiday from the taxpayers, as they did in Longstreet's time, and the frocks of little girls no longer button in the back, as Mrs. Freeman's Young Lucretia longed for hers to do. But much that has disappeared from our national conduct has but sunk out of sight into our national characteristics. If the full snap and crackle of Rowland Robinson's dialect may now be found only in reaches beyond the railroads, and if, in Dorothy Canfield's country, patchwork for bedquilts is now run up on the sewing machine, any Vermonter will recognize

in these tales the authentic spirit of this quintessentially American state. There is something strangely familiar about Caroline Kirkland's politician of near ninety years ago, and satires not without a certain timeliness might yet be written along the lines of Paulding's fable of old New York. A nation forever on the move recognizes the urge to be elsewhere that kept Hayden Carruth's Doggett on his way. Whenever the landmarks of life are torn up in a social or psychological upheaval, there will be American wanderers desperately trying, like Peter Rugg, to beat back to their spiritual Bostons.

The literary merit of these stories is sufficiently uneven to suggest to the discerning reader that they may not have been chosen for literary merit alone. The intention of the editor was not to provide one more anthology of "best American short stories", but to select, from stories of literary merit, such as might give to readers of to-day reliable and convincing reports from the past—sometimes the not-far-distant past—of American life and thought. Their writers were selected partly for their ability to make their impressions vivid, and partly for their special opportunities for getting these impressions at first hand or on the best authority. Hamlin Garland's story is based on one his mother told him—not her own, but that of a neighbor with the passionate nostalgia of the aging exile. "The Steeple Trap" is a slow-motion movie of Jacob Abbott's children. Lucy Furman was one of the "quare women" of the Hindman School; Mary Austin lived for years in the Land of Little Rain; Sarah Orne Jewett was born and bred in the Country of the Pointed Firs.

Often enough the story springs from the author's first adventure with the world away from home—Judge Hall's flatboat journey down the Ohio, Caroline Kirkland's Michigan honeymoon, Bret Harte's brief contact with California, Eggleston's young encounter with pioneer conditions. Sometimes the author was never able to write about anything in his later

life with a like vigor and vitality. Most of the earlier stories are from the one volume still showing signs of life on a shelfful of dead books signed with the same name.

As for the tales colored most deeply with nature or the supernatural, their particular circumstances may be of yesterday, but their spirit is unchanged, somewhere in America to-day. Paul Bunyan keeps up with the logging industry; Uncle Remus may be ante bellum, but Brer Rabbit is born anew for every American baby; and the wayfarer belated in the Notch of the White Mountains would find there to-day the brooding spirit pervading "The Ambitious Guest."

Without being actual narratives, with which our history is fortunately well reinforced, these stories have undoubted value as evidence; life was like that, in each one of them, somewhere in some of our yesterdays. And without too much insistence upon yesterday, it may be well to reflect that a nation that never looks over its shoulder will not know how far it has come.

The only story without pretensions to realism is that from New York City, one of those satiric squibs that James K. Paulding, according to his brother, was forever firing off in honor of what he regarded as the absurdities of the passing hour. But when I found a story that as faithfully reported life in an earlier New York as life in other parts of the country is represented in the others, it was either—like Bunner's beautiful "Story of a New York House" or the "Casa Napoléon" romances of Thomas Janvier—too long for such a collection as this, or, like "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," far too well known for yet another anthologist to have the face to offer it.

If I am asked why we should preserve, in stories like these, the records of our middle distance, I can but remind the reader that in life or in literature there must be a sense of continuity. And if, like a boy in such a school as Eggleston's,

we clean the slate at the close of every day, on the last day there will be but a single slateful, no matter how many days the writing may have been going on.

MAY LAMBERTON BECKER.

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GOLDEN TALES OF OUR AMERICA

WILLIAM AUSTIN

(1778–1841)

Three years after the Battle of Lexington, William Austin was born in Charlestown, Mass., and he was growing up in that time of transition so fascinating to Hawthorne—the years between the colonial and the modern period. So when he came to write his one great story, "Peter Rugg the Missing Man," he drew for its details upon the reservoir of certainty fed by the unconscious observations of childhood. The topography, the equipages, costumes, coins, appearing in this story and its sequel are indisputably of this very time; the hero, however, manages somehow to lay hold on something like timelessness. Menotomy has become Arlington, but Peter Rugg is still somewhere on the road to Boston; for though, in his "Further Account," Austin actually brought him back by way of Virginia, in 1825, it was but to tell him, "You were cut off from the last age, and you can never be fitted into the present. Your home is gone, and you can never have another in this world."

Commiserating this condition, Hawthorne gave him a home as doorkeeper of "A Virtuoso's Collection," but by 1891 Louise Imogen Guiney had him on the road again in "Peter Rugg the Bostonian," and in 1917 Amy Lowell whirled him

clattering into a new fame in the splendid "polyphonic prose" of "Before the Storm." He had nearly slipped altogether into folklore before he was caught back into our literature by the *Boston Book* (1841) and the Stedman-Hutchinson "Library of American Literature"; in New England a generation ago ten could have told you his story to one who knew that he had been created by William Austin, or indeed that he had come to them by way of print at all. Like his relatives, the Flying Dutchman and the Wandering Jew, he long since began to move by himself along the stream of legend, making his appearance now and again in literature. His creator seems to have been careless of fame in his connection; the story appeared under a pseudonym (in the *New England Galaxy*, September 10, 1824: the continuation in September 1, 1826 and January 19, 1827) and the editor could meet a clamor of inquiries only by complaining that the author "can surely find his way to the *Galaxy* office, though his hero could never reach Boston." Yet from the time he graduated from Harvard at twenty and went into politics, Austin had been interested in writing books; but politics just then took too much of an author's time, and nearly took this author's life as well; he was badly wounded in a duel for which, as a law-abiding Massachusetts man, he had to cross the line into Rhode Island. As his own children did not know of this engagement till after his death, one assumes that it was no matter of pride to his cooler years, when he was publishing his *Letters from London* and various political orations and theological essays.

But, from all he wrote, the story of "Peter Rugg" draws apart, serene and self-sufficient. Its serenity is the more noticeable because the story it tells is one of flux and uncertainty—like the time, when so many old landmarks had been torn up and so many men not yet old had found that they could

"never be fitted into the present." To this changing, passing period the style of the narrative is singularly well adapted, hovering as it does between reality and fantasy, and offering for every ghostly possibility a demure alternative of sober fact. One sees that this method was a favorite with Austin, from his use of it in "The Man with the Cloaks," [1] but only in his masterpiece has he used it to such purpose, and he remains a man of one story. But this ranks with the great short stories of the world.

[1] The student will find this in *William Austin, the Creator of Peter Rugg,* a sketch of William Austin with the best of his short stories, collected and edited by his grandson Walter Austin (Marshall Jones, 1925).

PETER RUGG, THE MISSING MAN

From *The New England Galaxy*

FROM JONATHAN DUNWELL OF NEW YORK, TO MR. HERMANN KRAUFF

Sir,—Agreeably to my promise, I now relate to you all the particulars of the lost man and child which I have been able to collect. It is entirely owing to the humane interest you seem to take in the report, that I have pursued the inquiry to the following result.

You may remember that business called me to Boston in the summer of 1820. I sailed in the packet to Providence, and when I arrived there I learned that every seat in the stage was engaged. I was thus obliged either to wait a few hours or accept a seat with the driver, who civilly offered me that accommodation. Accordingly I took my seat by his side, and soon found him intelligent and communicative.

When we had traveled about ten miles, the horses suddenly threw their ears on their necks, as flat as a hare's. Said the driver, "Have you a surtout with you?" "No," said I; "why do you ask?" "You will want one soon," said he; "do you observe the ears of all the horses?" "Yes, and was just about to ask the reason." "They see the storm-breeder, and we shall see him soon." At this moment there was not a cloud visible in

the firmament. Soon after a small speck appeared in the road. "There," said my companion, "comes the storm-breeder; he always leaves a Scotch mist behind him. By many a wet jacket do I remember him. I suppose the poor fellow suffers much himself, much more than is known to the world." Presently a man with a child beside him, with a large black horse, and a weather-beaten chair, once built for a chaise body, passed in great haste, apparently at the rate of twelve miles an hour. He seemed to grasp the reins of his horse with firmness, and appeared to anticipate his speed. He seemed dejected, and looked anxiously at the passengers, particularly at the stage-driver and myself. In a moment after he passed us, the horses' ears were up and bent themselves forward so that they nearly met. "Who is that man?" said I; "he seems in great trouble." "Nobody knows who he is, but his person and the child are familiar to me. I have met them more than a hundred times, and have been so often asked the way to Boston by that man, even when he was traveling directly from that town, that of late I have refused any communication with him, and that is the reason he gave me such a fixed look." "But does he never stop anywhere?" "I have never known him to stop anywhere longer than to inquire the way to Boston; and, let him be where he may, he will tell you he cannot stay a moment, for he must reach Boston that night."

We were now ascending a high hill in Walpole, and

as we had a fair view of the heavens, I was rather disposed to jeer the driver for thinking of his surtout, as not a cloud as big as a marble could be discerned. "Do you look," said he, "in the direction whence the man came, that is the place to look; the storm never meets him, it follows him." We presently approached another hill, and when at the height, the driver pointed out in an eastern direction a little black speck about as big as a hat. "There," said he, "is the seed storm; we may possibly reach Polley's before it reaches us, but the wanderer and his child will go to Providence through rain, thunder, and lightning." And now the horses, as though taught by instinct, hastened with increased speed. The little black cloud came on rolling over the turnpike, and doubled and trebled itself in all directions. The appearance of this cloud attracted the notice of all the passengers; for after it had spread itself to a great bulk, it suddenly became more limited in circumference, grew more compact, dark, and consolidated. And now the successive flashes of chain lightning caused the whole cloud to appear like a sort of irregular network, and displayed a thousand fantastic images. The driver bespoke my attention to a remarkable configuration in the cloud; he said every flash of lightning near its center discovered to him distinctly the form of a man sitting in an open carriage drawn by a black horse. But in truth I saw no such thing. The man's fancy was doubtless at fault. It is a very common thing for the

imagination to paint for the senses, both in the visible and invisible world.

In the meantime the distant thunder gave notice of a shower at hand, and just as we reached Polley's tavern the rain poured down in torrents. It was soon over, the cloud passing in the direction of the turnpike towards Providence. In a few moments after, a respectable-looking man in a chaise stopped at the door. The man and child in the chair having excited some little sympathy among the passengers, the gentleman was asked if he had observed them. He said he had met them; that the man seemed bewildered, and inquired the way to Boston; that he was driving at great speed, as though he expected to outstrip the tempest; that the moment he had passed him a thunderclap broke distinctly over the man's head and seemed to envelop both man and child, horse and carriage. "I stopped," said the gentleman, "supposing the lightning had struck him, but the horse only seemed to loom up and increase his speed, and, as well as I could judge, he traveled just as fast as the thunder cloud." While this man was speaking, a peddler with a cart of tin merchandise came up, all dripping; and, on being questioned, he said he had met that man and carriage, within a fortnight, in four different States; that at each time he had inquired the way to Boston, and that a thunder shower like the present had each time deluged him, his wagon and his wares, setting his tin pots, etc., afloat, so that he had deter-

mined to get marine insurance done for the future. But that which excited his surprise most was the strange conduct of his horse, for that, long before he could distinguish the man in the chair, his own horse stood still in the road and flung back his ears. "In short," said the peddler, "I wish never to see that man and horse again; they do not look to me as if they belonged to this world."

This is all that I could learn at that time; and the occurrence soon after would have become with me like one of those things which had never happened, had I not, as I stood recently on the doorstep of Bennett's hotel in Hartford, heard a man say, "There goes Peter Rugg and his child, he looks wet and weary, and farther from Boston than ever." I was satisfied it was the same man that I had seen more than three years before; for whoever has once seen Peter Rugg can never after be deceived as to his identity. "Peter Rugg!" said I, "and who is Peter Rugg?" "That," said the stranger, "is more than any one can tell exactly. He is a famous traveler, held in light esteem by all inn-holders, for he never stops to eat, drink, or sleep. I wonder why the Government does not employ him to carry the mail." "Ay," said a bystander, "that is a thought bright only on one side. How long would it take, in that case, to send a letter to Boston? For Peter has already, to my knowledge, been more than twenty years traveling to that place." "But," said I, "does the man never stop anywhere, does he never converse with any one? I saw the

same man more than three years since, near Providence, and I heard a strange story about him. Pray, sir, give me some account of this man." "Sir," said the stranger, "those who know the most respecting that man say the least. I have heard it asserted that heaven sometimes sets a mark on a man, either for a judgment or a trial. Under which Peter Rugg now labors I cannot say; therefore I am rather inclined to pity than to judge." "You speak like a humane man," said I, "and if you have known him so long I pray you will give me some account of him. Has his appearance much altered in that time?" "Why, yes; he looks as though he never ate, drank, or slept; and his child looks older than himself; and he looks like time broke off from eternity and anxious to gain a resting-place." "And how does his horse look?" said I. "As for his horse, he looks fatter and gayer, and shows more animation and courage, than he did twenty years ago. The last time Rugg spoke to me he inquired how far it was to Boston. I told him just one hundred miles. 'Why,' said he, 'how can you deceive me so? It is cruel to deceive a traveler. I have lost my way. Pray direct me the nearest way to Boston.' I repeated it was one hundred miles. 'How can you say so?' said he. 'I was told last evening it was but fifty, and I have traveled all night.' 'But,' said I, 'you are now traveling from Boston. You must turn back.' 'Alas!' said he, 'it is all turn back! Boston shifts with the wind, and plays all around the compass. One man tells me it is to the east, another to the west; and the guide-posts,

too, they all point the wrong way.' 'But will you not stop and rest?' said I; 'you seem wet and weary.' 'Yes,' said he, 'it has been foul weather since I left home.' 'Stop, then, and refresh yourself.' 'I must not stop, I must reach home to-night, if possible, though I think you must be mistaken in the distance to Boston.' He then gave the reins to his horse, which he restrained with difficulty, and disappeared in a moment. A few days afterwards I met the man a little this side of Claremont, winding around the hills in Unity, at the rate, I believe, of twelve miles an hour."

"Is Peter Rugg his real name, or has he accidentally gained that name?" "I know not, but presume he will not deny his name; you can ask him, for see, he has turned his horse and is passing this way." In a moment a dark-colored, high-spirited horse approached, and would have passed without stopping, but I had resolved to speak to Peter Rugg, or whoever the man might be. Accordingly, I stepped into the street, and as the horse approached I made a feint of stopping him. The man immediately reined in his horse. "Sir," said I, "may I be so bold as to inquire if you are not Mr. Rugg? for I think I have seen you before." "My name is Peter Rugg," said he; "I have unfortunately lost my way; I am wet and weary, and will take it kindly of you to direct me to Boston." "You live in Boston, do you, and in what street?" "In Middle Street." "When did you leave Boston?" "I cannot tell precisely; it seems a considerable time." "But how did you and your child

become so wet? it has not rained here to-day." "It has just rained a heavy shower up the river. But I shall not reach Boston to-night if I tarry. Would you advise me to take the old road, or the turnpike?" "Why, the old road is one hundred and seventeen miles, and the turnpike is ninety-seven." "How can you say so? you impose on me; it is wrong to trifle with a traveler; you know it is but forty miles from Newburyport to Boston." "But this is not Newburyport; this is Hartford." "Do not deceive me, sir. Is not this town Newburyport, and the river that I have been following the Merrimac?" "No, sir; this is Hartford, and the river the Connecticut." He wrung his hands and looked incrdulous. "Have the rivers, too changed their courses as the cities have changed places? But see, the clouds are gathering in the south, and we shall have a rainy night. Ah, that fatal oath!" He would tarry no longer. His impatient horse leaped off, his hind flanks rising like wings—he seemed to devour all before him and to scorn all behind.

I had now, as I thought, discovered a clue to the history of Peter Rugg, and I determined, the next time my business called me to Boston, to make a further inquiry. Soon after I was enabled to collect the following particulars from Mrs. Croft, an aged lady in Middle Street, who has resided in Boston during the last twenty years. Her narration is this: The last summer a person, just at twilight, stopped at the door of the late Mrs. Rugg. Mrs. Croft, on coming to the door, perceived a

stranger, with a child by his side, in an old, weather-beaten carriage, with a black horse. The stranger asked for Mrs. Rugg, and was informed that Mrs. Rugg had died, at a good old age, more than twenty years before that time. The stranger replied, "How can you deceive me so? do ask Mrs. Rugg to step to the door." "Sir, I assure you Mrs. Rugg has not lived here these nineteen years; no one lives here but myself, and my name is Betsey Croft." The stranger paused, and looked up and down the street, and said, "Though the painting is rather faded, this looks like my house." "Yes," said the child, "that is the stone before the door that I used to sit on to eat my bread and milk." "But," said the stranger, "it seems to be on the wrong side of the street. Indeed, everything here seems to be misplaced. The streets are all changed, the people are all changed, the town seems changed, and, what is strangest of all, Catharine Rugg has deserted her husband and child." "Pray," said the stranger, "has John Foy come home from sea? He went a long voyage; he is my kinsman. If I could see him, he could give me some account of Mrs. Rugg." "Sir," said Mrs. Croft, "I never heard of John Foy. Where did he live?" "Just above here, in Orange-Tree Lane." "There is no such place in this neighborhood." "What do you tell me! Are the streets gone? Orange-Tree Lane is at the head of Hanover Street, near Pemberton's Hill." "There is no such lane now." "Madam! you cannot be serious. But you doubtless know my brother, William Rugg. He lives in Royal

Exchange Lane, near King Street." "I know of no such lane; and I am sure there is no such street as King Street in this town." "No such street as King Street? Why, woman! you mock me. You may as well tell me there is no King George. However, madam, you see I am wet and weary. I must find a resting-place. I will go to Hart's tavern, near the market." "Which market, sir? for you seem perplexed; we have several markets." "You know there is but one market, near the town dock." "Oh, the old market. But no such man as Hart has kept there these twenty years."

Here the stranger seemed disconcerted, and muttered to himself quite audibly: "Strange mistake! How much this looks like the town of Boston! It certainly has a great resemblance to it; but I perceive my mistake now. Some other Mrs. Rugg, some other Middle Street." Then said he, "Madam, can you direct me to Boston?" "Why, this is Boston, the city of Boston. I know of no other Boston." "City of Boston it may be, but it is not the Boston where I live. I recollect now, I came over a bridge instead of a ferry. Pray what bridge is that I just came over?" "It is Charles River bridge." "I perceive my mistake; there is a ferry between Boston and Charlestown, there is no bridge. Ah, I perceive my mistake. If I was in Boston, my horse would carry me directly to my own door. But my horse shows by his impatience that he is in a strange place. Absurd, that I should have mistaken this place for the old town of Boston! It is a much finer city than the town of Bos-

ton. It has been built long since Boston. I fancy Boston must lie at a distance from this city, as the good woman seems ignorant of it." At these words his horse began to chafe, and strike the pavement with his fore feet; the stranger seemed a little bewildered, and said, "No home to-night," and, giving the reins to his horse, passed up the street, and I saw no more of him.

It was evident that the generation to which Peter Rugg belonged had passed away.

This was all the account of Peter Rugg I could obtain from Mrs. Croft; but she directed me to an elderly man, Mr. James Felt, who lived near her, and who had kept a record of the principal occurrences for the last fifty years. At my request she sent for him; and, after I had related to him the object of my inquiry, Mr. Felt told me he had known Rugg in his youth; that his disappearance had caused some surprise; but as it sometimes happens that men run away, sometimes to be rid of others, and sometimes to be rid of themselves; and as Rugg took his child with him, and his own horse and chair; and as it did not appear that any creditors made a stir, the occurrence soon mingled itself in the stream of oblivion; and Rugg and his child, horse and chair, were soon forgotten. "It is true," said Mr. Felt, "sundry stories grew out of Rugg's affair, whether true or false I cannot tell; but stranger things have happened in my day, without even a newspaper notice." "Sir," said I, "Peter Rugg is now living. I have lately seen Peter Rugg and his child, horse and chair; therefore I pray

you to relate to me all you know or ever heard of him." "Why, my friend," said James Felt, "that Peter Rugg is now a living man I will not deny; but that you have seen Peter Rugg and his child is impossible, if you mean a small child, for Jenny Rugg, if living, must be at least —let me see—Boston Massacre, 1770—Jenny Rugg was about ten years old. Why, sir, Jenny Rugg if living must be more than sixty years of age. That Peter Rugg is living is highly probable, as he was only ten years older than myself; and I was only eighty last March, and I am as likely to live twenty years longer as any man." Here I perceived that Mr. Felt was in his dotage, and I despaired of gaining any intelligence from him on which I could depend.

I took my leave of Mrs. Croft, and proceeded to my lodgings at the Marlborough Hotel.

If Peter Rugg, thought I, has been traveling since the Boston Massacre, there is no reason why he should not travel to the end of time. If the present generation know little of him, the next will know less, and Peter and his child will have no hold on this world.

In the course of the evening I related my adventure in Middle Street. "Ha!" said one of the company, smiling, "do you really think you have seen Peter Rugg? I have heard my grandfather speak of him as though he seriously believed his own story." "Sir," said I, "pray let us compare your grandfather's story of Mr. Rugg with my own." "Peter Rugg, sir, if my grandfather was worthy of credit, once lived in Middle Street, in

this city. He was a man in comfortable circumstances, had a wife and one daughter, and was generally esteemed for his sober life and manners. But unhappily his temper at times was altogether ungovernable, and then his language was terrible. In these fits of passion, if a door stood in his way he would never do less than kick a panel through. He would sometimes throw his heels over his head, and come down on his feet, uttering oaths in a circle. And thus, in a rage, he was the first who performed a somerset, and did what others have since learned to do for merriment and money. Once Rugg was seen to bite a tenpenny nail in halves. In those days everybody, both men and boys, wore wigs; and Peter, at these moments of violent passion, would become so profane that his wig would rise up from his head. Some said it was on account of his terrible language; others accounted for it in a more philosophical way, and said it was caused by the expansion of his scalp, as violent passion, we know, will swell the veins and expand the head. While these fits were on him, Rugg had no respect for heaven or earth. Except this infirmity, all agreed that Rugg was a good sort of a man; for when his fits were over, nobody was so ready to commend a placid temper as Peter.

"It was late in autumn, one morning, that Rugg, in his own chair, with a fine large black horse, took his daughter and proceeded to Concord. On his return a violent storm overtook him. At dark he stopped in Menotomy (now West Cambridge), at the door of a

Mr. Cutter, a friend of his, who urged him to tarry overnight. On Rugg's declining to stop, Mr. Cutter urged him vehemently. 'Why, Mr. Rugg,' said Cutter, 'the storm is overwhelming you; the night is exceeding dark; your little daughter will perish; you are in an open chair, and the tempest is increasing.' '*Let the storm increase,*' said Rugg, with a fearful oath, '*I will see home to-night, in spite of the last tempest! or may I never see home.*' At these words he gave his whip to his high-spirited horse, and disappeared in a moment. But Peter Rugg did not reach home that night, nor the next; nor, when he became a missing man, could he ever be traced beyond Mr. Cutter's in Menotomy. For a long time after, on every dark and stormy night, the wife of Peter Rugg would fancy she heard the crack of a whip, and the fleet tread of a horse, and the rattling of a carriage, passing her door. The neighbors, too, heard the same noises, and some said they knew it was Rugg's horse; the tread on the pavement was perfectly familiar to them. This occurred so repeatedly that at length the neighbors watched with lanterns, and saw the real Peter Rugg, with his own horse and chair, and child sitting beside him, pass directly before his own door, his head turning towards his house, and himself making every effort to stop his horse, but in vain. The next day the friends of Mrs. Rugg exerted themselves to find her husband and child. They inquired at every public house and stable in town; but it did not appear that Rugg made any stay in Boston. No one, after Rugg

had passed his own door, could give any account of him; though it was asserted by some that the clatter of Rugg's horse and carriage over the pavements shook the houses on both sides of the street. And this is credible, if, indeed, Rugg's horse and carriage did pass on that night. For at this day, in many of the streets, a loaded truck or team in passing will shake the houses like an earthquake. However, Rugg's neighbors never afterwards watched again; some of them treated it all as a delusion, and thought no more of it. Others, of a different opinion, shook their heads and said nothing. Thus Rugg and his child, horse and chair, were soon forgotten; and probably many in the neighborhood never heard a word on the subject.

"There was indeed a rumor that Rugg afterwards was seen in Connecticut, between Suffield and Hartford, passing through the country like a streak of chalk. This gave occasion to Rugg's friends to make further inquiry. But the more they inquired, the more they were baffled. If they heard of Rugg one day in Connecticut, the next day they heard of him winding around the hills in New Hampshire; and soon after, a man in a chair, with a small child, exactly answering the description of Peter Rugg, would be seen in Rhode Island, inquiring the way to Boston.

"But that which chiefly gave a color of mystery to the story of Peter Rugg was the affair at Charlestown bridge. The toll-gatherer asserted that sometimes, on the darkest and most stormy nights, when no object

could be discerned, about the time Rugg was missing, a horse and wheel carriage, with a noise equal to a troop, would at midnight, in utter contempt of the rates of toll, pass over the bridge. This occurred so frequently that the toll-gatherer resolved to attempt a discovery. Soon after, at the usual time, apparently the same horse and carriage approached the bridge from Charlestown square. The toll-gatherer, prepared, took his stand as near the middle of the bridge as he dared, with a large three-legged stool in his hand. As the appearance passed, he threw the stool at the horse, but heard nothing except the noise of the stool skipping across the bridge. The toll-gatherer on the next day asserted that the stool went directly through the body of the horse, and he persisted in that belief ever after. Whether Rugg, or whoever the person was, ever passed the bridge again, the toll-gatherer would never tell; and when questioned, seemed anxious to waive the subject. And thus Peter Rugg and his child, horse and carriage, remain a mystery to this day."

This, sir, is all that I could learn of Peter Rugg in Boston. . . .

ROWLAND ROBINSON

(1833–1900)

Some say that "Danvis," where so much conversation went on in Uncle Lisha's cobble shop, was really Lincoln, a mountain settlement in Northern Vermont. Rowland Robinson, however, had no particular place in mind. His people came to lighten his darkness—for when he began to write about them it was upon a "blind man's slate"—from the days when much of the state was still "The Wilderness." He said that he recorded "the manners, customs and speech in vogue fifty or sixty years ago," which, as he wrote in the nineties, would put their time somewhere in the thirties, when it was still possible to listen to a survivor of the Battle of Bennington. Sam Lovel and Beri Burton, Jozeff Hill, Ann Twine the Canuck, and all the comfortable company of Danvis, are the last survivors in literature of the folk that then peopled these hills.

Perhaps one reason for the extraordinary accuracy of the dialect may be because the man who transcribed it had been thrown back upon the sense of hearing for his main contact with the world. It was not, however, his only contact, even in his latter days. The tall, white-bearded, handsome old man might have been seen almost any day at the turn of the century, coming from a day's fishing on the Little Otter near his home at Ferrisburg, or making his way, his hand on his

son's shoulder, about his dear woodlands. Like his own old fishermen who resented trespass signs, he loved, "as a man the rooftree whereunder he was born, these arches and low aisles of the woods." It was as a naturalist that he began to write for *Forest and Stream*. He had furnished it with comic illustrations on wood until the coming of the "process" method dislodged him. *In New England Fields and Woods* is a country calendar made of these sketches. Besides *Uncle Lisha's Shop*, from which this story is taken, he wrote several other volumes of stories with the same characters, including *Danvis Folks*, which preserves for the folk song collector, music and all, the priceless melody whose words begin "Lum tiddle, lum tiddle, t'l law day."

The humor of these tales is of the "dry" sort relished to this day in these mountains, and the types of mankind found in them still persist there. Sam Lovel the hunter stirs in the blood of the sober farmer who takes down his rifle to go after woodchucks, and berrying is yet the brief reversion to the wild of the staid farmer's wife. As for the dialect, enough of it lingers back of the hills to prove the accuracy with which it is set down. The word "julluk" for "just like" will start memories in any old Vermonter, and a fine example of the curious results of mixing transposed English with Canadian French is found in Antoine's version of a familiar song—though it must be admitted he was singing rather late in the course of a social gathering—

"Hokeyhol' buckle, ha-ern bung buckle,
Hol' cover mess buckle, he' ll hang up de well."

Rowland Robinson lived and died in an elm shaded farmhouse built before the War of 1812, looking toward Mansfield, with Champlain glittering through the pines.

UNCLE LISHA'S SPRING GUN

From *Uncle Lisha's Shop*

Uncle Lisha Peggs was the owner of a small farm lying so near the Green Mountains that his wood-lot was on a westering slope of one of their spurs, and the "black growth" of balsam and spruce crept down to the upper edge of the sugar-bush. His acres were too few to keep him steadily employed in their tillage, and so, in slack times, as well as in evenings and rainy days, he mended the boots and shoes of his neighbors, and was sometimes persuaded, as a special favor, to exercise the craft to the extent of building a pair of leathern conveniences. These productions could not be praised for their beauty, for the builder did not hold greatly to snug fits. If the sole of the wearer's foot set fairly on the inner sole of the boot and there were two or three points of contact with the uppers, his ideal of a perfect fit was realized.

He " 'callated his stogies 'ould turn water like a cabbage-leaf if you gin 'em a dost o' taller or mushrat ile onct a week, an' wear julluk iron, an' when a feller onct got 'em broke they sot dreffle easy"—all of which was true, and especially the dreadfulness of the easiness.

One Sunday, late in summer-time, when the sun shone hot from a brassy sky through a smoke haze that blurred the shadows' edges, and the grass was slippery

with drought, and the locust gave voice to the parching heat, Uncle Lisha had performed the duty of church attendance, smoothing his way through it with a comfortable nap, and had eaten his Sunday dinner. He was now taking another nap in his "Windsor chair," a-tilt on the stoop, his head and face smotheringly protected from the flies by the broad "bendinah hankercher" used only on Sundays, at weddings, funerals and county fairs. At last an exploring fly found his way under the edge of this expanse of dotted red silk, and got so far on his tour of discovery as the entrance of one of the caverns in the mountain of Lisha's nose, into which he was suddenly drawn by a sort of whirlwind, whereupon ensued a commotion which must have seemed to him at least an earthquake or a tornado. He was cast forth by a tremendous blast, the silken canopy was blown away, the chair came down on its forelegs with a bang that awakened Aunt Jerusha on her decorous patchwork couch in the darkened bedroom, the cat from her siesta, and set the fowls to cackling.

Of course Uncle Lisha was broad awake, and looking in to tell Aunt Jerusha that "the darn'd flies wouldn't let a feller sleep, an' he guessed he'd gwup an' see how the corn looked," rammed the bandana into the chamber of his bell-crowned beaver, as if loading a cannon, and then putting his head in for a ball, held across lots in his shirt-sleeves, his Sunday boots creaking soberly among the fading daisies of the pasture, and clattering against them a jerky tattoo. He forded, dry-

footed, Stone Brook, now more stony than watery, and went through the corner of the sugar-bush, where the giant trees were healing their spring wounds in the summer sunshine, and past the silent shanty covering its sap tubs and the upturned potash kettle, with squirrels and mice for housekeepers at this season.

Beside this lay the two acres of corn, the long leaves rolled by the heat into slender spikes, making the rows indeed "spiky ranks of maize," between which the pumpkins trailed their dark vines overhung by their own drooping leaves, pigeon grass and rag-weed, with here and there a yellowing globe shining through the rank growth, but not yet so bright as the golden chalices of late blossoms out of which the bees were drinking honey. The pollen of the tassels powdered the leaves, and the fray of silk at the end of the ears was turning from pale green to brown, showing that the kernels were set and well on in the milk, and would soon begin to glaze in the furnace of August. In spite of the dry weather, the promise of a crop was very comforting to Uncle Lisha, till as he wandered through the rustling rows he came to the upper edge of the field nearest the dark woods, so near that their balsamic odors spiced the cloying sweetness of the corn-blossoms.

Here had been havoc. Stalks were torn and trampled down, ears stripped and munched and trodden into the earth as if a herd of swine had been at large among them.

"'Coons!" cried Uncle Lisha, as at first he stood

aghast. "Darn'd if I don't get Sam Lovel to come up here with his hound to-night!—no, to-morrer night."

Then as his eye caught in the mellow soil the imprint of a clawed foot as big as his hand, he started with something like alarm. "Good airth and seas! It's a cussed bear! Yes," he said, as he plucked a tuft of long dark fur from the thorns of the blackberry by the fence," "it's a cussed bear!" Then, as he remembered the day, he apologized to his Sunday clothes—"Wall, he *is* a cussed bear! Why couldn't he a' eat blackberries, 'stead a' spilin' ten bushels o' corn. Dutten corn, tew, none o' your nasty Tucket! Gol darn 'im, I'll set a spring gun for him to-night—no, to-morrer night!" And he set his face homeward, full of wrath and news, bearing in his hands a tuft of bear's fur and a munched ear of corn, in proof of the righteousness of the one and the truth of the other.

Monday forenoon was spent by him in warning his neighbors that he was about to set a spring gun, so that coon hunters and cross-lot travellers might not run into danger in his cornfield; and the afternoon was devoted to rigging the deadly contrivance.

First he loaded his ancient piece, which when set upright was taller then himself, with the old military charge, a ball and three buckshot on top of half his palmful of powder: then bearing his gun and his axe to the edge of the cornfield, he cut two stout stakes

three feet long, which he drove into the ground about four feet apart and then split the tops downward far enough to allow the gripe of the gun to be forced into the cleft of the first and the barrel into that of the second, so that the line of fire should be according to established rule—"at the hayth of the outside bone of a feller's knee." Close to and opposite the lock he drove another stake, on top of which he fixed a short lever with one end resting against the front of the trigger. To the other end, when the work was completed, was attached a line of elm bark, rubbed with earth to dull its too conspicuous whiteness and stretching out sixty or seventy feet beyond the gun muzzle, running at intervals through cleft stakes, wedged to keep them from pinching it.

When Uncle Lish's task was done, and he straightened his long-bent back with his palms and gave a last critical look at his infernal machine, he could see no reason why it should not do its deadly work if the bear would do his part. So toward sundown he primed the gun and, setting it at full cock, left it to guard the cornfield. Hoping to get a booming report that should tell of the death of the spoiler, he hardly got into his accustomed heavy sleep till midnight, but was not awakened from it by any sound till cockcrow.

Then, when the rayless sun was rising like a red moon above the ridge of the mountain, he went to the cornfield and found everything undisturbed, no more

corn destroyed, and the old gun asleep with beads of dew on its rusty barrel. He made it harmless for the day by brushing the priming out of the pan and setting it at half-cock.

"Las' night want his night," he said, "but he'll come to-night, see 'f he don't!" and went home.

Toward nightfall he put the spring gun on guard again. As in the gloaming he leaned over the "do' yard" fence, smoking a meditative pipe, with his eastern ear unconsciously cocked toward the cornfield, he became aware of an intermittent glow a furlong down the lonely road that outshone the flashing of the fireflies. It was somebody's pipe, and as it drew nearer its dim light revealed the features of Antoine Bassette, a self-styled Canadian "patriot," who had fought and fled with Papineau, and had taken shelter here, safe from the lion's paw even in the edge of the eagle's nest, where he was hatching out into an American citizen, chipping the shell with brave pecks at the speech and customs of Yankee land. Thus far in his life's pilgrimage he had shuffled along in moccasins, but as he drew near to naturalization he aspired to boots, which, having been bespoken and duly measured for, were the cause of his visit to Uncle Lisha.

"Bushoo, musheer," said Lisha, airing his French in the twilight.

"Bon soir, monsieur," politely responded Bassette, and then with more faith in his own English, poor as it was, than in Uncle Lisha's French, good as its owner

thought it; "Prob'ly you got dem boot done, Onc' Lasha, don't it? Wal, prob'ly it an't. Wal, Ah don't care, you gat heem done fore soon, prob'ly. One man tole me bear heat mos' all up your corn, Onc' Lasha, an' you goin' catch heem wid gawn. Dat so, Onc' Lasha, hein? You tink it bear, Onc' Lasha? Wal, ah guess it Ba'tlett's hol saow, me. Sacre cochon! heat all ma patack! Daam hole pig like dat! You gat good gawn, Onc' Lasha? Ah spose so, prob'ly, good gawn keel bear? Da' a no bear you co'nfeel. Ba'tlett's hole saow. Ah hope you gawn ketch heem, me. You gat dat boots did, Onc' Lasha?"

And not till now did Lisha find a chance to answer that they were not done, and that he was sure it was not neighbor Bartlett's hog that had done the mischief in the cornfield, for he had seen plainly the tracks of a bear and had found fur such as never grew on swine.

The boots were so near completion that a half-hour's work would make them ready for the torture of the poor Canuck.

"Come in, Ann Twine, come in, an' I'll finish 'em up to rights." So saying, Uncle Lisha led the way into his little shop, and lighted the candle which, stuck in the end of a jointed wooden sconce, illumined his nightly labors. Then he deliberately donned his leather apron, lowered himself into the polished leathern seat of his shop-bench, set his iron-rimmed, owl-eyed spectacles astride his nose, fished out the boots from a clutter of clumsy lasts, broad slabs of sole leather, and rolls of

cowhide and sheepskin, gave his long shoe-knife a rasping on the peculiar, coarse, gritty stone used only by shoemakers, and was ready for work, or would have been if the sharp knife had not reminded him of a story which he began to tell, while the edge of the knife and the boot, held between his knees, shared, by turns, his admiring glances.

"Ann Twine, when my father lived in C'net'cut he knowed a man 'at had a shoe-knife julluk that 'at was the cutest thing to cut bread with anybody ever see, so't they useter send for the shoemaker to go to tarverns when the' was trainin's and to housen when th' was gret weddin's, an' such carummuxes, jest a puppus to cut the bread. Onct th' was a gret shearin' to Colonel Leavenworth's at kep' a thousand sheep, an' had twenty shearers an' big doin's generally, an' they sent for him to—"

But he did not finish his story that night, for just then the heavy air was torn by a loud report, so startling in the midst of the outer stillness that had been broken only by the steady creak of the crickets, that it might remind one of the signal-gun of some savagely-beleaguered block-house of the olden time, and 'Tater Hill hurled back an echo like an answering gun from another fort, and Hog's Back another, and mingling with the swelling and dying reverberations was an angry yell as of attacking Indians.

"Good airth an' seas!" cried Uncle Lisha, scattering

his exclamations, his spectacles, and the boot from the shoe-bench to the dooryard gate, as he rushed out, brandishing his knife.

"Come on, Ann Twine, come on, I've got him!"

He was half way across the pasture before Antoine decided to follow him, and the Canadian barely kept the valorous old Yankee in sight in the hazy moonlight as he stumbled across the stone field and splashed through the brook and quite lost him among the shadows of the maples, but found him again in the cornfield, just in time to see him charge upon a writhing black object, the bear, sorely hit with the ounce ball and buckshot. The fray was short, the bear sank out of it in a limp heap and his conquerer crept out of it, groaning:

"Oh, Ann Twine, be you here?" he gasped. "The dummed etarnal critter's tore all my insides out, but I've gathered up the best on 'em an' I'm goin' to try to git home with 'em."

As he became more clearly revealed to the terrified Frenchman in the hazy light of the harvest moon, he was seen to be stooping painfully along, bearing some burden in his gathered apron.

"Oh, sacre! sacre! sacre! Da's too bad, Onc' Lasha, too bad, too bad! Oh, sacre! Bah gash, sacre!" He had seen nothing so terrible in the Papineau war. "Oh, what Ah do, Onc' Lasha, what Ah do?"

"You can't help me here none, Ann Twine, but you cut fu' the house an' git onter the hoss an' put fur the

darkter. Mabby he c'n stuff 'em back so they'll answer for a spell."

Antoine, with a face whiter than the moon that shone above him, sped across the fields at a pace which had distinguished the close of his military career. He shot himself into the kitchen of the little farm-house and gave placid Aunt Jerusha a dreadful shock with the dire tidings that "Onc' Lasha keel bear an' bear keel heem! Hole man dead an' bringen' hissif home in hees aprum! Ah go for doctah rat off!"

The next minute he was in the barn, saddling the old horse and five minutes later went clattering down the road at a lumbering gallop toward the doctor's, five miles away.

Poor Aunt Jerusha went hurrying across the pasture to give her wounded lord such succor as she could, with an unwonted sickness at her stout heart. It was a sufficient sign of her trepidation and alarm that she had forgotten to put on her sunbonnet. Half way across the field, Lisha became discernible against the dull whiteness of the mouse ear and everlasting of the sterile hillside. As they approached each other, he seemed indeed to be bringing himself home in his apron, as the Frenchman had said, stooping over a burden in that garment which was gathered in both his hands.

"Oh, father, be you dead?" sobbed Aunt Jerusha, in a voice strangely mingled of shrill and deep tones.

"No, mother, I ain't dead; but I guess I'm goin' to be. The 'tarnal critter has tore me all to pieces! My

heart an' lights an' stummerk is inside yet, but I guess he's scooped out all the rest on 'em."

"Oh, what kin I do for ye, father; what kin I do?" cried the wife. "Antwine's gone lickaty split arter the darkter, an' 't can't be long 'fore he'll come. I do' know as I could git 'em back right if I tried, but I'll try 'f ye say so, father?"

"No, mother," Lisha answered, weakly; "you can't do nothin', only keep along with me, jist as ye allers have, Jerushy," he added, with a tremulous tenderness in his voice that reminded her of its tones when she was young and fair Jerusha Chase, and he came courting on the Sunday nights, left forty years behind in their plodding journey.

So they went slowly homeward, she, when they came to the fences, making a way for him to pass through. When at last they got home the good old wife put him and his burden tenderly to bed in clothes and apron, and then, with the housewifely instinct strong upon her even in the midst of trouble, put things "to rights" for the doctor's visit, and as quietly as possible awaited that event.

Some neighbors to whom Antoine had scattered out crumbs of the burden of news as he journeyed toward the doctor's, came dropping in to offer their help with the ready kindness of our primitive communities. But there was nothing for them to do. Two or three of the oldest women sat in the little bedroom where Aunt Jerusha watched beside her husband, whom she dared

not doubt was soon to leave her alone in this end of the world, for their only son had settled in "the 'Hio," then almost at the other end of the world. The other women sat primly against the walls of the "square room," some telescoping their sunbonnets together and magnifying in whispers the latest neighborhood gossip.

The men lounged in the doorways or against the side of the house and dooryard fence, and told in low voices their experience with bears and discussed this most recent and tragic one.

"Uncle Lisha hedn't fit bears much," said Samuel Lovel, a tall farmer who loved hunting more than farming; " 'f he hed he wouldn't a-tackled one with a shoe-knife."

"Wal," said Tom Hamlin, another hunting farmer, "it don't somehow seem noways fair t' set spring guns and traps and such for varmints, 'thout it's skunks and mink an' mushrats. I'd rather shute one bear 'n' t' trap ten. They ha' no more instinc' about a trap 'n' a skunk hes!"

"Wal," drawled Joseph Hill, "skunks hes outstink! —seems 's 'ough they hed."

"But then," apologized Joel Bartlett, "thee sees he was a-eatin' all Uncle Lisha's corn, 'n' the'd got to be suthin' did. I should feel bore aout in killin' a bear any way I could—if I hed to pizen him."

"That would spile the skin," objected Joseph Hill, with an eye to the main chance, " 'n' I d'know but 'twould the ile; sartinly 'twould the meat."

"Dot rot bears' meat," Tom Hamlin said; "I'd jes' 's soon eat snake's meat!"

"Wal," remarked Joseph Hill, "I've hearn o' folks 'at liked snake's meat. I'd a leetle druther hev bear. It all depends on how a feller was brung up, 'n' we never hed no snakes cooked 't aour haouse—that is, not's I remember on."

"Wonder 'f Uncle Lisha's bear's fat?" queried a thrifty man. "If he is 't 'ill be quite a help to the widder. Bear's ile is wuth suthin' consid'able."

"It's a hopesin' the' haint a-goin' tu be no widder," said Sam Lovel; "we can't let Uncle Lisha go yit awhile—but there!" exclaimed the tall hunter, unlooping himself from the fence, "why haint we thought to go an' fetch the bear hum 'stead a-loafin' round here duin' nothin'? Come on, men; git a' axe to cut a pole an' a rope to tie his laigs together—no, the line of the gun'll do for that."

And so, the axe found, a half dozen of them started across the field and faded out of sight long before their voices were drawn beyond hearing.

The doctor had been aroused from his slumbers by Antoine's loud summons to "Come up to Onc' Lasha. Bear tore his eenside all off, an' he don' gat ma boot done, mos'."

The first of the small hours found the rough but kindly old mediciner at Lisha's door before the bearers had returned with the dear-bought spoil.

"Now, come in here with me, you two chaps," he

said, selecting a couple of stout hearts, "and bring each on ye a candle. Well, Lisha," looking at his patient intently and examining his pulse, "you don't 'pear so very bad off. Guess we can fix you up for another bear fight yet! Now, men, hold the lights" and he put on his spectacles, rolled back his cuffs and turned down the folds of the leather apron. He carefully touched and closely inspected for a moment what was disclosed, then his face flushed angrily, and the candle-bearers were horrified to see him gather up the trailing mass in both hands and hurl it across the room, roaring:

"You confounded old fool! these all belong to the bear!"

Though Lisha had received some ugly scratches, he had suffered no serious injury, and was able next day to finish Antoine's boots. And in consideration of his services in the old man's hour of sore trial he was made happy, until he had worn them a day, by having them given him outright.

DOROTHY CANFIELD

(Mrs. John Redwood Fisher)

Some Vermonters are born so, and some choose to be; to the latter class belongs Dorothy Canfield. She was born in Kansas, took one degree at the Ohio State University and another at Columbia, travelled much abroad—she grew up speaking several languages—and was for three years in foreign war work, to which her *Home Fires in France* bears witness. But almost as soon as she began to publish—in her second volume—the scene was that of Vermont, the state in which her home is set, at Arlington. It was *Hillsboro' People,* the volume from which this story is taken. Since then her *Brimming Cup, Rough-Hewn, Her Son's Wife* and other novels have given her nation-wide renown, but the Vermont country and its people still appear in much of her best work, seldom with greater fidelity than in this simple story of art and life.

The "tapestry of the New World," into whose system of blazing-stars and log-cabins genius might break with a new pattern, no longer appears at our country fairs, nor the "old maid" in our social scheme. But there was once a day when the patchwork quilt was a national art-form, and the resident

maiden aunt a stand-by—too often unesteemed—of the American family. And to this day, repressed and colorless lives sometimes find expression—and with it social value—in the work of their hands.

THE BEDQUILT

From *Hillsboro' People*

Of all the Elwell family Aunt Mehetabel was certainly the most unimportant member. It was in the New England days, when an unmarried woman was an old maid at twenty, at forty was everyone's servant, and at sixty had gone through so much discipline that she could need no more in the next world. Aunt Mehetabel was sixty-eight.

She had never for a moment known the pleasure of being important to anyone. Not that she was useless in her brother's family; she was expected, as a matter of course, to take upon herself the most tedious and uninteresting part of the household labors. On Mondays she accepted as her share the washing of the men's shirts, heavy with sweat and stiff with dirt from the fields and from their own hard-working bodies. Tuesdays she never dreamed of being allowed to iron anything pretty or even interesting, like the baby's white dresses or the fancy aprons of her young lady nieces. She stood all day pressing out a tiresome monotonous succession of dishcloths and towels and sheets.

In preserving-time she was allowed to have none of the pleasant responsibility of deciding when the fruit had cooked long enough, nor did she share in the little excitement of pouring the sweet-smelling stuff into the

stone jars. She sat in a corner with the children and stoned cherries incessantly, or hulled strawberries until her fingers were dyed red to the bone.

The Elwells were not consciously unkind to their aunt, they were even in a vague way fond of her; but she was so utterly insignificant a figure in their lives that they bestowed no thought whatever on her. Aunt Mehetabel did not resent this treatment; she took it quite as unconsciously as they gave it. It was to be expected when one was an old maid dependent in a busy family. She gathered what crumbs of comfort she could from their occasional careless kindnesses and tried to hide the hurt which even yet pierced her at her brother's rough joking. In the winter when they all sat before the big hearth, roasted apples, drank mulled cider, and teased the girls about their beaux and the boys about their sweethearts, she shrank into a dusty corner with her knitting, happy if the evening passed without her brother saying, with a crude sarcasm, "Ask your Aunt Mehetabel about the beaux that used to come a-sparkin' her!" or, "Mehetabel, how was't when you was in love with Abel Cummings?" As a matter of fact, she had been the same at twenty as at sixty, a quiet, mouse-like little creature, too timid and shy for anyone to notice, or to raise her eyes for a moment and wish for a life of her own.

Her sister-in-law, a big hearty housewife, who ruled indoors with as autocratic a sway as did her husband on the farm, was rather kind in an absent, offhand way

to the shrunken little old woman, and it was through her that Mehetabel was able to enjoy the one pleasure of her life. Even as a girl she had been clever with her needle in the way of patching bedquilts. More than that she could never learn to do. The garments which she made for herself were the most lamentable affairs, and she was humbly grateful for any help in the bewildering business of putting them together. But in patchwork she enjoyed a tepid importance. She could really do that as well as anyone else. During years of devotion to this one art she had accumulated a considerable store of quilting patterns. Sometimes the neighbors would send over and ask "Miss Mehetabel" for such and such a design. It was with an agreeable flutter at being able to help someone that she went to the dresser, in her bare little room under the eaves, and extracted from her crowded portfolio the pattern desired.

She never knew how her great idea came to her. Sometimes she thought she must have dreamed it, sometimes she even wondered reverently, in the phraseology of the weekly prayer-meeting, if it had not been "sent" to her. She never admitted to herself that she could have thought of it without other help; it was too great, too ambitious, too lofty a project for her humble mind to have conceived. Even when she finished drawing the design with her own fingers, she gazed at it incredulously, not daring to believe that it could indeed be her handiwork. At first it seemed to her only like a lovely but quite unreal dream. She did not think of

putting it into execution—so elaborate, so complicated, so beautifully difficult a pattern could be only for the angels in heaven to quilt. But so curiously does familiarity accustom us even to very wonderful things, that as she lived with this astonishing creation of her mind, the longing grew stronger and stronger to give it material life with her nimble old fingers.

She gasped at her daring when this idea first swept over her and put it away as one does a sinfully selfish notion, but she kept coming back to it again and again. Finally she said compromisingly to herself that she would make one "square," just one part of her design, to see how it would look. Accustomed to the most complete dependence on her brother and his wife, she dared not do even this without asking Sophia's permission. With a heart full of hope and fear thumping furiously against her old ribs, she approached the mistress of the house on churning-day, knowing with the innocent guile of a child that the country woman was apt to be in a good temper while working over the fragrant butter in the cool cellar.

Sophia listened absently to her sister-in-law's halting, hesitating petition. "Why, yes, Mehetabel," she said, leaning far down into the huge churn for the last golden morsels—"why, yes, start another quilt if you want to. I've got a lot of pieces from the spring sewing that will work in real good." Mehetabel tried honestly to make her see that this would be no common quilt, but her limited vocabulary and her emotion stood between her

and expression. At last Sophia said, with a kindly impatience: "Oh, there! Don't bother me. I never could keep track of your quiltin' patterns, anyhow. I don't care what pattern you go by."

With this overwhelmingly, although unconsciously, generous permission Mehetabel rushed back up the steep attic stairs to her room, and in a joyful agitation began preparations for the work of her life. It was even better than she hoped. By some heaven-sent inspiration she had invented a pattern beyond which no patchwork quilt could go.

She had but little time from her incessant round of household drudgery for this new and absorbing occupation, and she did not dare sit up late at night lest she burn too much candle. It was weeks before the little square began to take on a finished look, to show the pattern. Then Mehetabel was in a fever of impatience to bring it to completion. She was too conscientious to shirk even the smallest part of her share of the work of the house, but she rushed through it with a speed which left her panting as she climbed to the little room. This seemed like a radiant spot to her as she bent over the innumerable scraps of cloth which already in her imagination ranged themselves in the infinitely diverse pattern of her masterpiece. Finally she could wait no longer, and one evening ventured to bring her work down beside the fire where the family sat, hoping that some good fortune would give her a place near the tallow candles on the mantelpiece. She was on the last

corner of the square, and her needle flew in and out with inconceivable rapidity. No one noticed her, a fact which filled her with relief, and by bedtime she had but a few more stitches to add.

As she stood up with the others, the square fluttered out of her trembling old hands and fell on the table. Sophia glanced at it carelessly. "Is that the new quilt you're beginning on?" she asked with a yawn. "It looks like a real pretty pattern. Let's see it." Up to that moment Mehetabel had labored in the purest spirit of disinterested devotion to an ideal, but as Sophia held her work toward the candle to examine it, and exclaimed in amazement and admiration, she felt an astonished joy to know that her creation would stand the test of publicity.

"Land sakes!" ejaculated her sister-in-law, looking at the many-colored square. "Why, Mehetabel Elwell, where'd you git that pattern?"

"I made it up," said Mehetabel quietly, but with unutterable pride. "No!" exclaimed Sophia incredulously. "*Did* you! Why, I never see such a pattern in my life. Girls, come here and see what your Aunt Mehetabel is doing."

The three tall daughters turned back reluctantly from the stair. "I don't seem to take much interest in patchwork," said one listlessly.

"No, nor I neither!" answered Sophia; "but a stone image would take an interest in this pattern. Honest, Mehetabel, did you think of it yourself? And how un-

der the sun and stars did you ever git your courage up to start in a-making it? Land! Look at all those tiny squinchy little seams! Why the wrong side ain't a thing *but* seams!"

The girls echoed their mother's exclamations, and Mr. Elwell himself came over to see what they were discussing. "Well, I declare!" he said, looking at his sister with eyes more approving than she could ever remember. "That beats old Mis' Wightman's quilt that got the blue ribbon so many times at the county fair."

Mehetabel's heart swelled within her, and tears of joy moistened her old eyes as she lay that night in her narrow, hard bed, too proud and excited to sleep. The next day her sister-in-law amazed her by taking the huge pan of potatoes out of her lap and setting one of the younger children to peeling them. "Don't you want to go on with that quiltin' pattern?" she said; "I'd kind o' like to see how you're goin' to make the grape-vine design come out on the corner."

By the end of the summer the family interest had risen so high that Mehetabel was given a little stand in the sitting-room where she could keep her pieces, and work in odd minutes. She almost wept over such kindness, and resolved firmly not to take advantage of it by neglecting her work, which she performed with a fierce thoroughness. But the whole atmosphere of her world was changed. Things had a meaning now. Through the longest task of washing milk-pans there

rose the rainbow of promise of her variegated work. She took her place by the little table and put the thimble on her knotted, hard finger with the solemnity of a priestess performing a sacred rite.

She was even able to bear with some degree of dignity the extreme honor of having the minister and the minister's wife comment admiringly on her great project. The family felt quite proud of Aunt Mehetabel as Minister Bowman had said it was work as fine as any he had ever seen, "and he didn't know but finer!" The remark was repeated verbatim to the neighbors in the following weeks when they dropped in and examined in a perverse silence some astonishingly difficult *tour de force* which Mehetabel had just finished.

The family especially plumed themselves on the slow progress of the quilt. "Mehetabel has been to work on that corner for six weeks, come Tuesday, and she ain't half done yet," they explained to visitors. They fell out of the way of always expecting her to be the one to run on errands, even for the children. "Don't bother your Aunt Mehetabel," Sophia would call. "Can't you see she's got to a ticklish place on the quilt?"

The old woman sat up straighter and looked the world in the face. She was a part of it at last. She joined in the conversation and her remarks were listened to. The children were even told to mind her when she asked them to do some service for her, although this she did but seldom, the habit of self-effacement being too strong.

One day some strangers from the next town drove up and asked if they could inspect the wonderful quilt which they had heard of, even down in their end of the valley. After that such visitations were not uncommon, making the Elwells' house a notable object. Mehetabel's quilt came to be one of the town sights, and no one was allowed to leave the town without having paid tribute to its worth. The Elwells saw to it that their aunt was better dressed than she had ever been before, and one of the girls made her a pretty little cap to wear on her thin white hair.

A year went by and a quarter of the quilt was finished; a second year passed and half was done. The third year Mehetabel had pneumonia and lay for weeks and weeks, overcome with terror lest she die before her work was completed. A fourth year and one could really see the grandeur of the whole design; and in September of the fifth year, the entire family watching her with eager and admiring eyes, Mehetabel quilted the last stitches in her creation. The girls held it up by the four corners, and they all looked at it in a solemn silence. Then Mr. Elwell smote one horny hand within another and exclaimed: "By ginger! That's goin' to the county fair!" Mehetabel blushed a deep red at this. It was a thought that had occurred to her in a bold moment, but she had not dared to entertain it. The family acclaimed the idea, and one of the boys was forthwith dispatched to the house of the neighbor who was chairman of the committee for their village. He returned with radiant

face. "Of course he'll take it. Like's not it may git a prize, so he says; but he's got to have it right off, because all the things are goin' to-morrow morning."

Even in her swelling pride Mehetabel felt a pang of separation as the bulky package was carried out of the house. As the days went on she felt absolutely lost without her work. For years it had been her one preoccupation, and she could not bear even to look at the little stand, now quite bare of the litter of scraps which had lain on it so long. One of the neighbors, who took the long journey to the fair, reported that the quilt was hung in a place of honor in a glass case in "Agricultural Hall." But that meant little to Mehetabel's utter ignorance of all that lay outside of her brother's home. The family noticed the old woman's depression, and one day Sophia said kindly, "You feel sort o' lost without the quilt, don't you, Mehetabel?"

"They took it away so quick!" she said wistfully; "I hadn't hardly had one real good look at it myself."

Mr. Elwell made no comment, but a day or two later he asked his sister how early she could get up in the morning.

"I dun'no'. Why?" she asked.

"Well, Thomas Ralston has got to drive clear to West Oldton to see a lawyer there, and that is four miles beyond the fair. He says if you can git up so's to leave here at four in the morning he'll drive you over to the fair, leave you there for the day, and bring you back again at night."

Mehetabel looked at him with incredulity. It was as though someone had offered her a ride in a golden chariot up to the gates of heaven. "Why, you can't *mean* it!" she cried, paling with the intensity of her emotion. Her brother laughed a little uneasily. Even to his careless indifference this joy was a revelation of the narrowness of her life in his home. "Oh, 'tain't so much to go to the fair. Yes, I mean it. Go git your things ready, for he wants to start to-morrow morning."

All that night a trembling, excited old woman lay and stared at the rafters. She, who had never been more than six miles from home in her life, was going to drive thirty miles away—it was like going to another world. She who had never seen anything more exciting than a church supper was to see the county fair. To Mehetabel it was like making the tour of the world. She had never dreamed of doing it. She could not at all imagine what it would be like.

Nor did the exhortations of the family, as they bade good-by to her, throw any light on her confusion. They had all been at least once to the scene of gayety she was to visit, and as she tried to eat her breakfast they called out conflicting advice to her till her head whirled. Sophia told her to be sure and see the display of preserves. Her brother said not to miss inspecting the stock, her nieces said the fancywork was the only thing worth looking at, and her nephews said she must bring home an account of the races. The buggy drove up to the door, she was helped in, and her wraps tucked about

her. They all stood together and waved good-by to her as she drove out of the yard. She waved back, but she scarcely saw them. On her return home that evening she was very pale, and so tired and stiff that her brother had to lift her out bodily, but her lips were set in a blissful smile. They crowded around her with thronging questions, until Sophia pushed them all aside, telling them Aunt Mehetabel was too tired to speak until she had had her supper. This was eaten in an enforced silence on the part of the children, and then the old woman was helped into an easy-chair before the fire. They gathered about her, eager for news of the great world, and Sophia said, "Now, come, Mehetabel, tell us all about it!"

Mehetabel drew a long breath. "It was just perfect!" she said; "finer even than I thought. They've got it hanging up in the very middle of a sort o' closet made of glass, and one of the lower corners is ripped and turned back so's to show the seams on the wrong side."

"What?" asked Sophia, a little blankly.

"Why, the quilt!" said Mehetabel in surprise. "There are a whole lot of other ones in that room, but not one that can hold a candle to it, if I do say it who shouldn't. I heard lots of people say the same thing. You ought to have heard what the women said about that corner, Sophia. They said—well, I'd be ashamed to *tell* you what they said. I declare if I wouldn't!"

Mr. Elwell asked, "What did you think of that big ox we've heard so much about?"

"I didn't look at the stock," returned his sister indifferently. "That set of pieces you gave me, Maria, from your red waist, come out just lovely!" she assured one of her nieces. "I heard one woman say you could 'most smell the red silk roses."

"Did any of the horses in our town race?" asked young Thomas.

"I didn't see the races."

"How about the preserves?" asked Sophia.

"I didn't see the preserves," said Mehetabel calmly. "You see, I went right to the room where the quilt was, and then I didn't want to leave it. It had been so long since I'd seen it, I had to look at it first real good myself, and then I looked at the others to see if there was any that could come up to it. And then the people begun comin' in and I got so interested in hearin' what they had to say I couldn't think of goin' anywheres else. I ate my lunch right there too, and I'm glad as can be I did, too; for what do you think?"—she gazed about her with kindling eyes—"while I stood there with a sandwich in one hand didn't the head of the hull concern come in and open the glass door and pin 'First Prize' right in the middle of the quilt!"

There was a stir of congratulation and proud exclamation. Then Sophia returned again to the attack. "Didn't you go to see anything else?" she queried.

"Why, no," said Mehetabel. "Only the quilt. Why should I?"

She fell into a reverie where she saw again the glori-

ous creation of her hand and brain hanging before all the world with the mark of highest approval on it. She longed to make her listeners see the splendid vision with her. She struggled for words; she reached blindly after unknown superlatives. "I tell you it looked like—" she said, and paused, hesitating. Vague recollections of hymn-book phraseology came into her mind, the only form of literary expression she knew; but they were dismissed as being sacrilegious, and also not sufficiently forcible. Finally, "I tell you it looked real *well!*" she assured them, and sat staring into the fire, on her tired old face the supreme content of an artist who has realized his ideal.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

(1804–1864)

The *Twice Told Tales* were written when Hawthorne was "the obscurest man of letters in America"; they appeared in magazines and annuals, according to his own statement, "without making (so far as he has ever been aware) the slightest impression on the public." He had indeed in 1837 no public; "he was merely writing to his known and unknown friends."

His public was not to come until *The Scarlet Letter* brought him a renown that, gathering with each successive book, has lasted so well that two new biographies in 1928 were received with eagerness. But neither renown nor audience could ever bring him out of the solitude in which his inner life was spent, and to which, so far as might be, his outer life inclined.

It is this spirit of brooding solitude and impending fate that informs "The Ambitious Guest." Man is alone in hostile Nature. The mountains hold aloof until the fatal moment of overthrow; the wind sounds warning before the traveller; human beings cling together, uniting their frail strength against dark surrounding powers.

In a day of subways and electric lights, of crowds and of

pavements, it is well thus to look back for an evening upon an America of wild unbroken forests, of solitudes and perils—and of families lighting hearthfires in the wilderness, braving darkness and the powers of the storm.

THE AMBITIOUS GUEST

From *Twice Told Tales*

One September night a family had gathered round their hearth and piled it high with the drift-wood of mountain streams, the dry cones of the pine, and the splintered ruins of great trees that had come crashing down the precipice. Up the chimney roared the fire, and brightened the room with its broad blaze. The faces of the father and mother had a sober gladness; the children laughed; the eldest daughter was the image of Happiness at seventeen; and the aged grandmother, who sat knitting in the warmest place, was the image of Happiness grown old. They had found the "herb, heart's-ease," in the bleakest spot of all New England. This family were situated in the Notch of the White Hills, where the wind was sharp throughout the year, and pitilessly cold in the winter—giving their cottage all its fresh inclemency, before it descended on the valley of the Saco. They dwelt in a cold spot and a dangerous one; for a mountain towered above their heads, so steep that the stones would often rumble down its sides, and startle them at midnight.

The daughter had just uttered some simple jest that filled them all with mirth, when the wind came through the Notch, and seemed to pause before their cottage—

rattling the door, with a sound of wailing and lamentation, before it passed into the valley. For a moment it saddened them, though there was nothing unusual in the tones. But the family were glad again, when they perceived that the latch was lifted by some traveller, whose footsteps had been unheard amid the dreary blast which heralded his approach, and wailed as he was entering, and went moaning away from the door.

Though they dwelt in such a solitude, these people held daily converse with the world. The romantic pass of the Notch is a great artery, through which the life-blood of internal commerce is continually throbbing, between Maine on the one side, and the Green Mountains and the shores of the St. Lawrence on the other. The stage-coach always drew up before the door of the cottage. The wayfarer, with no companion but his staff, paused here to exchange a word, that the sense of loneliness might not utterly overcome him, ere he could pass through the cleft of the mountain, or reach the first house in the valley. And here the teamster, on his way to Portland market, would put up for the night; and, if a bachelor, might sit an hour beyond the usual bedtime, and steal a kiss from the mountain maid at parting. It was one of those primitive taverns where the traveller pays only for food and lodging, but meets with a homely kindness, beyond all price. When the footsteps were heard, therefore, between the outer door and the inner one, the whole family rose up, grandmother, children, and all, as if about to welcome some-

one who belonged to them, and whose fate was linked with theirs.

The door was opened by a young man. His face at first wore the melancholy expression, almost despondency, of one who travels a wild and bleak road at nightfall and alone, but soon brightened up when he saw the kindly warmth of his reception. He felt his heart spring forward to meet them all, from the old woman, who wiped a chair with her apron, to the little child that held out its arms to him. One glance and smile placed the stranger on a footing of innocent familiarity with the eldest daughter.

"Ah, this fire is the right thing!" cried he; "especially when there is such a pleasant circle round it. I am quite benumbed; for the Notch is just like the pipe of a great pair of bellows; it has blown a terrible blast in my face, all the way from Bartlett."

"Then you are going towards Vermont?" said the master of the house, as he helped to take a light knapsack off the young man's shoulders.

"Yes; to Burlington, and far enough beyond," replied he. "I meant to have been at Ethan Crawford's to-night; but a pedestrian lingers along such a road as this. It is no matter; for, when I saw this good fire, and all your cheerful faces, I felt as if you had kindled it on purpose for me, and were waiting my arrival. So I shall sit down among you, and make myself at home."

The frank-hearted stranger had just drawn his chair

to the fire, when something like a heavy footstep was heard without, rushing down the steep side of the mountain, as with long and rapid strides, and taking such a leap, in passing the cottage, as to strike the opposite precipice. The family held their breath, because they knew the sound, and their guest held his by instinct.

"The old mountain has thrown a stone at us, for fear we should forget him," said the landlord, recovering himself. "He sometimes nods his head, and threatens to come down; but we are old neighbors, and agree together pretty well, upon the whole. Besides, we have a sure place of refuge hard by, if he should be coming in good earnest."

Let us now suppose the stranger to have finished his supper of bear's meat; and, by his natural felicity of manner, to have placed himself on a footing of kindness with the whole family, so that they talked as freely together as if he belonged to their mountain brood. He was of a proud, yet gentle spirit—haughty and reserved among the rich and great; but ever ready to stoop his head to the lowly cottage-door, and be like a brother or a son at the poor man's fireside. In the household of the Notch he found warmth and simplicity of feeling, the pervading intelligence of New England, and a poetry of native growth, which they had gathered, when they little thought it, from the mountain peaks and chasms, and at the very threshold of their romantic and dangerous abode. He had travelled far and alone; his whole life, indeed, had been

a solitary path; for, with the lofty caution of his nature, he had kept himself apart from those who might otherwise have been his companions. The family, too, though so kind and hospitable, had that consciousness of unity among themselves, and separation from the world at large, which, in every domestic circle, should still keep a holy place where no stranger may intrude. But, this evening, a prophetic sympathy impelled the refined and educated youth to pour out his heart before the simple mountaineers, and constrained them to answer him with the same free confidence. And thus it should have been. Is not the kindred of a common fate a closer tie than that of birth?

The secret of the young man's character was a high and abstracted ambition. He could have borne to live an undistinguished life, but not to be forgotten in the grave. Yearning desire had been transformed to hope; and hope, long cherished, had become like certainty, that, obscurely as he journeyed now, a glory was to beam on all his pathway—though not, perhaps, while he was treading it. But, when posterity should gaze back into the gloom of what was now the present, they would trace the brightness of his footsteps, brightening as meaner glories faded, and confess that a gifted one had passed from his cradle to his tomb, with none to recognize him.

"As yet," cried the stranger, his cheek glowing and his eye flashing with enthusiasm," as yet, I have done nothing. Were I to vanish from the earth to-morrow,

none would know so much of me as you; that a nameless youth came up at nightfall, from the valley of the Saco, and opened his heart to you in the evening, and passed through the Notch, by sunrise, and was seen no more. Not a soul would ask—'Who was he?—Whither did the wanderer go?' But I cannot die till I have achieved my destiny. Then let death come! I shall have built my monument!"

There was a continual flow of natural emotion, gushing forth amid abstracted reverie, which enabled the family to understand this young man's sentiments, though so foreign from their own. With quick sensibility of the ludicrous, he blushed at the ardour into which he had been betrayed.

"You laugh at me," said he, taking the eldest daughter's hand, and laughing himself. "You think my ambition as nonsensical as if I were to freeze myself to death on the top of Mount Washington, only that people might spy at me from the country round about it. And truly, that would be a noble pedestal for a man's statue!"

"It is better to sit here by the fire," answered the girl, blushing, "and be comfortable, and contented, though nobody thinks about us."

"I suppose," said her father, after a fit of musing, "there is something natural in what the young man says; and, if my mind had been turned that way, I might have felt just the same. It is strange, wife, how

this talk has set my head running on things that are pretty certain never to come to pass."

"Perhaps they may," observed the wife. "Is the man thinking what he will do when he is a widower?"

"No, no!" cried he, repelling the idea with reproachful tenderness. "When I think of your death, Esther, I think of mine too. But I was wishing we had a good farm, in Bartlett, or Bethlehem, or Littleton, or some other township round the White Mountains; but not where they could tumble on our heads. I should want to stand well with my neighbors, and be called 'Squire,' and sent to General Court for a term or two; for a plain honest man may do as much good there as a lawyer. And when I should be grown quite an old man, and you an old woman, so as not to be long apart, I might die happy enough, in my bed, and leave you all crying around me. A slate gravestone would suit me as well as a marble one—with just my name and age, and a verse of a hymn, and something to let people know that I lived an honest man and died a Christian."

"There now!" exclaimed the stranger; "it is our nature to desire a monument, be it slate, or marble, or a pillar of granite, or a glorious memory in the universal heart of man."

"We're in a strange way to-night," said the wife, with tears in her eyes. "They say it's a sign of something when folks' minds go a-wandering so. Hark to the children!"

They listened accordingly. The younger children had been put to bed in another room, but with an open door between, so that they could be heard talking busily among themselves. One and all seemed to have caught the infection from the fireside circle, and were outvying each other in wild wishes and childlike projects, of what they would do, when they came to be men and women. At length, a little boy, instead of addressing his brothers and sisters, called out to his mother.

"I'll tell you what I wish, mother," cried he. "I want you and father and grandma'am, and all of us, and the stranger too, to start right away, and go and take a drink out of the basin of the Flume!"

Nobody could help laughing at the child's notion of leaving a warm bed, and dragging them from a cheerful fire, to visit the basin of the Flume—a brook, which tumbles over the precipice, deep within the Notch. The boy had hardly spoken, when a wagon rattled along the road, and stopped a moment before the door. It appeared to contain two or three men, who were cheering their hearts with the rough chorus of a song, which resounded in broken notes, between the cliffs, while the singers hesitated whether to continue their journey, or put up here for the night.

"Father," said the girl, "they are calling you by name."

But the good man doubted whether they had really called him, and was unwilling to show himself too solicitous of gain, by inviting people to patronize his house.

He therefore did not hurry to the door; and the lash being soon applied, the travellers plunged into the Notch, still singing and laughing, though their music and mirth came back drearily from the heart of the mountain.

"There, mother!" cried the boy, again. "They'd have given us a ride to the Flume!"

Again they laughed at the child's pertinacious fancy for a night ramble. But it happened that a light cloud passed over the daughter's spirit; she looked gravely into the fire, and drew a breath that was almost a sigh. It forced its way, in spite of a little struggle to repress it. Then starting and blushing, she looked quickly round the circle, as if they had caught a glimpse into her bosom. The stranger asked what she had been thinking of.

"Nothing," answered she, with a downcast smile. "Only I felt lonesome just then."

"Oh, I have always had a gift for feeling what is in other people's hearts," said he, half seriously. "Shall I tell the secrets of yours? For I know what to think when a young girl shivers by a warm hearth, and complains of lonesomeness at her mother's side. Shall I put these feelings into words?"

"They would not be a girl's feelings any longer, if they could be put into words," replied the mountain nymph, laughing, but avoiding his eye.

All this was said apart. Perhaps a germ of love was springing in their hearts, so pure that it might blossom

in paradise, since it could not be matured on earth; for women worship such gentle dignity as his; and the proud, contemplative, yet kindly soul is oftenest captivated by simplicity like hers. But, while they spoke softly, and he was watching the happy sadness, the lightsome shadows, the shy yearnings of a maiden's nature, the wind, through the Notch, took a deeper and drearier sound. It seemed, as the fanciful stranger said, like the choral strains of the spirits of the blast, who, in old Indian times, had their dwelling among these mountains, and made their heights and recesses a sacred region. There was a wail along the road, as if a funeral were passing. To chase away the gloom, the family threw pine-branches on the fire, till the dry leaves crackled, and the flame arose, discovering once again a scene of peace and humble happiness. The light hovered about them fondly, and caressed them all. There were the little faces of the children peeping from their bed apart, and here the father's frame of strength, the mother's subdued and careful mien, the high-browed youth, the budding girl, and the good old grandam, still knitting in the warmest place. The aged woman looked up from her task, and, with fingers ever busy, was the next to speak.

"Old folks have their notions," said she, "as well as young ones. You've been wishing and planning, and letting your heads run on one thing and another, till you've set my mind a-wandering too. Now what should an old woman wish for when she can go but a step

or two before she comes to her grave? Children, it will haunt me night and day till I tell you."

"What is it, mother?" cried the husband and wife at once.

Then the old woman, with an air of mystery, which drew the circle closer round the fire, informed them that she had provided her grave-clothes some years before—a nice linen shroud, a cap with a muslin ruff, and everything of a finer sort than she had worn since her wedding-day. But this evening an old superstition had strangely recurred to her. It used to be said, in her younger days, that if anything were amiss with a corpse, if only the ruff were not smooth, or the cap did not set right, the corpse, in the coffin and beneath the clods, would strive to put up its cold hands and arrange it. The bare thought made her nervous.

"Don't talk so, grandmother," said the girl, shuddering.

"Now," continued the old woman, with singular earnestness, yet smiling strangely at her own folly, "I want one of you, my children—when your mother is dressed, and in the coffin—I want one of you to hold a looking-glass over my face. Who knows but I may take a glimpse at myself, and see whether all's right?"

"Old and young, we dream of graves and monuments," murmured the stranger. "I wonder how mariners feel when the ship is sinking, and they, unknown and undistinguished, are to be buried together in the ocean—that wide and nameless sepulchre!"

For a moment the old woman's ghastly conception so engrossed the minds of her hearers, that a sound, abroad in the night, rising like the roar of the blast, had grown broad, deep, and terrible before the fated group were conscious of it. The house, and all within it, trembled; the foundations of the earth seemed to be shaken, as if this awful sound were the peal of the last trump. Young and old exchanged one wild glance, and remained an instant, pale, affrighted, without utterance, or power to move. Then the same shriek burst simultaneously from all their lips.

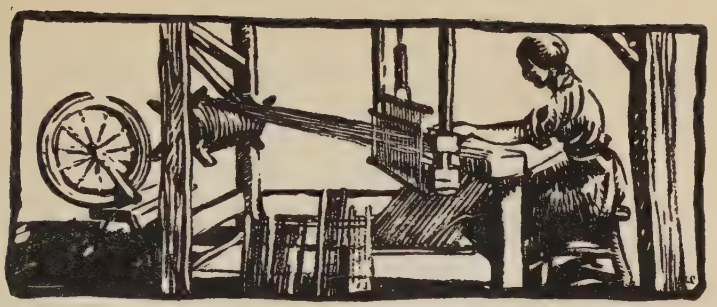
"The Slide! the Slide!"

The simplest words must intimate, but not portray, the unutterable horror of the catastrophe. The victims rushed from their cottage and sought refuge in what they deemed a safer spot—where, in contemplation of such an emergency, a sort of barrier had been reared. Alas! they had quitted their security, and fled right into the pathway of destruction. Down came the whole side of the mountain in a cataract of ruin. Just before it reached the house the stream broke into two branches, shivering not a window there, but overwhelming the whole vicinity, blocked up the road, and annihilated everything in its dreadful course. Long ere the thunder of that great Slide had ceased to roar among the mountains, the mortal agony had been endured, and the victims were at peace. Their bodies were never found.

The next morning the light smoke was seen stealing from the cottage chimney up the mountain-side. Within,

the fire was yet smouldering upon the hearth, and the chairs in a circle round it, as if the inhabitants had but gone forth to view the devastation of the Slide, and would shortly return to thank Heaven for their miraculous escape. All had left separate tokens, by which those who had known the family were made to shed a tear for each. Who has not heard their name? The story has been told far and wide, and will for ever be a legend of these mountains. Poets have sung their fate.

There were circumstances which led some to suppose that a stranger had been received into the cottage on this awful night, and had shared the catastrophe of all its inmates. Others denied that there were sufficient grounds for such a conjecture. Woe for the high-souled youth, with his dream of Earthly Immortality! His name and person utterly unknown; his history, his way of life, his plans—a mystery never to be solved; his death and his existence equally a doubt! Whose was the agony of that death-moment?



MARY E. WILKINS FREEMAN

From the first short story signed Mary E. Wilkins, which appeared in *Harper's Magazine*, discriminating critics knew that a realist of the highest order had appeared, a delicate and patient observer of New England life and character. She was born not far from Boston; both parents died when she was young, and her life and her schooling were austere. When she began to write in the eighties these primitive Puritans of whom she wrote were already gone from all but the more remote and shut-in corners of her country. The War and the West had begun long since the long drain of the northern countryside that the call of the cities was soon to complete. In her lifetime immigration was to spread across these farms and wipe away the trace of their former owners. Writing from what she knew, she produced fiction that may be called historical.

The art that shaped the little masterpieces in *A Humble Romance* and *A New England Nun* is the despair of imitators. Surely there was never a more striking justification of New England economy; the maximum effect is produced with the minimum of material. If it be objected that in these first volumes and in the novels and stories that followed them the proportion of eccentrics is high, it must be remembered that this civilization was favorable to their production, and to

the development of noble types of what grandmothers used to call "New England odd." But the home life of "Young Lucretia"—the title-story of her third volume—is not so much unlike that of other country children of the time, and her protest on behalf of family pride is comprehensible to anyone who knows how passionate such pride can be.

Of the group of short story writers who have taken New England as their theme, Mrs. Freeman has attained the most widely spread fame. If a comparatively unfamiliar story has been selected for this book, it is partly because the more familiar ones are already so well on their way to become classics as to be found in many other anthologies.

YOUNG LUCRETIA

From *Young Lucretia and Other Stories*

"WHO's that little gal goin' by?" said old Mrs. Emmons.

"That—why, that's young Lucretia, mother," replied her daughter Ann, peering out of the window over her mother's shoulder. There was a fringe of flowering geraniums in the window; the two women had to stretch their heads over them.

"Poor little soul!" old Mrs. Emmons remarked further. "I pity that child."

"I don't see much to pity her for," Ann returned, in a voice high-pitched and sharply sweet; she was the soprano singer in the village choir. "I don't see why she isn't taken care of as well as most children."

"Well, I don't know but she's took care of, but I guess she don't get much coddlin'. Lucretia an' Maria ain't that kind—never was. I heerd the other day they was goin' to have a Christmas-tree down to the schoolhouse. Now I'd be willin' to ventur' consider'ble that child don't have a thing on't."

"Well, if she's kept clean an' whole, an' made to behave, it amounts to a good deal more'n Christmas presents, I suppose"; Ann sat down and turned a hem with vigour; she was a dressmaker.

"Well, I s'pose it does, but it kinder seems as if that

little gal ought to have somethin'. Do you remember them little rag babies I used to make for you, Ann? I s'pose she'd be terrible tickled with one. Some of that blue thibet would be jest the thing to make it a dress of."

"Now, mother, you ain't goin' to fussing. She won't think anything of it."

"Yes, she would too. You used to take sights of comfort with 'em." Old Mrs. Emmons, tall and tremulous, rose up and went out of the room.

"She's gone after the linen pieces," thought her daughter Ann. "She is dreadfully silly." Ann began smoothing out some remnants of blue thibet on her lap. She selected one piece that she thought would do for the dress.

Meanwhile young Lucretia went to school. It was quite a cold day, but she was warmly dressed. She wore her Aunt Lucretia's red and green plaid shawl, which Aunt Lucretia had worn to meeting when she was herself a little girl, over her Aunt Maria's black ladies'-cloth coat. The coat was very large and roomy—indeed, it had not been altered at all—but the cloth was thick and good. Young Lucretia wore also her Aunt Maria's black alpaca dress, which had been somewhat decreased in size to fit, and her Aunt Lucretia's purple hood with a nubia tied over it. She had mittens, a black quilted petticoat, and her Aunt Maria's old drab stockings drawn over her shoes to keep the snow from her ankles. If young Lucretia caught cold, it would not be

her aunts' fault. She went along rather clumsily but quite merrily, holding her tin dinner-pail very steady. Her aunts had charged her not to swing it, and "get the dinner in a mess."

Young Lucretia's face, with very pink cheeks, and smooth lines of red hair over the temples, looked gaily and honestly out of the hood and nubia. Here and there along the road were sprigs of evergreen and ground-pine and hemlock. Lucretia glanced a trifle soberly at them. She was nearly in sight of the school-house when she reached Alma Ford's house, and Alma came out and joined her. Alma was trim and pretty in her fur-bordered winter coat and her scarlet hood.

"Hullo, Lucretia!" said Alma.

"Hullo!" responded Lucretia. Then the two little girls trotted on together; the evergreen sprigs were growing thicker. "Did you go?" asked Lucretia, looking down at them.

"Yes; we went way up to the cross-roads. They wouldn't let you go, would they?"

"No," said Lucretia, smiling broadly.

"I think it was *mean*," said Alma.

"They said they didn't approve of it," said Lucretia, in a serious voice, which seemed like an echo of some one else's.

When they got to the school-house it took her a long time to unroll herself from her many wrappings. When at last she had emerged there was not another child there who was dressed quite after her fashion. Seen

from behind, she looked like a small, tightly-built old lady. Her little basque, cut after her aunt's own pattern, rigorously whaleboned, with long straight seams, opened in front; she wore a dimity ruffle, a square blue bow to fasten it, and a brown gingham apron. Her sandy hair was parted vigorously in the middle, brought over her temples in two smooth streaky scallops, and braided behind in two tight tails, fastened by a green bow. Young Lucretia was a homely little girl, although her face was always radiantly good-humoured. She was a good scholar, too, and could spell and add sums as fast as anybody in the school.

In the entry, where she took off her things, there was a great litter of evergreen and hemlock; in the farthest corner, lopped pitifully over on its side, was a fine hemlock-tree. Lucretia looked at it, and her smiling face grew a little serious.

"That the Christmas-tree out there?" she said to the other girls when she went into the school-room. The teacher had not come, and there was such an uproar and jubilation that she could hardly make herself heard. She had to poke one of the girls two or three times before she could get her question answered.

"What did you say, Lucretia Raymond?" she asked.

"That the Christmas-tree out there?"

"Course 'tis. Say, Lucretia, can't you come this evening and help trim? The boys are a-going to set up the tree, and we're going to trim. Say, can't you come?"

Then the other girls joined in: "Can't you come, Lucretia?—say, can't you?"

Lucretia looked at them all, with her honest smile. "I don't believe I can," said she.

"Won't they let you?—won't your aunts let you?"

"Don't believe they will."

Alma Ford stood back on her heels and threw back her chin. "Well, I don't care," said she. "I think your aunts are *awful mean*—so there!"

Lucretia's face grew pinker, and the laughter died out of it. She opened her lips, but before she had a chance to speak, Lois Green, who was one of the older girls, and an authority in the school, added her testimony. "They are two mean, stingy old maids," she proclaimed; "that's what they are."

"They're not neither," said Lucretia, unexpectedly. "You shan't say such things about my aunts, Lois Green."

"Oh, you can stick up for 'em if you want to," returned Lois, with cool aggravation. "If you want to be such a little gump, you can, an' nobody'll pity you. You know you won't get a single thing on this Christmas-tree."

"I will, too," cried Lucretia, who was fiery, with all her sweetness.

"You won't."

"You see if I don't, Lois Green."

"You won't."

All through the day it seemed to her, the more she thought of it, that she must go with the others to trim the school-house, and she must have something on the Christmas-tree. A keen sense of shame for her aunts and herself was over her; she felt as if she must keep up the family credit.

"I wish I could go to trim this evening," she said to Alma, as they were going home after school.

"Don't you believe they'll let you?"

"I don't believe they'll 'prove of it," Lucretia answered, with dignity.

"Say, Lucretia, do you s'pose it would make any difference if my mother should go up to your house an' ask your aunts?"

Lucretia gave her a startled look: a vision of her aunts' indignation at such interference shot before her eyes. "Oh, I don't believe it would do a mite of good," said she, fervently. "But I tell you what 'tis, Alma, you might come home with me while I ask."

"I will," said Alma eagerly, "just wait a minute till I ask mother if I can."

But it was all useless. Alma's pretty, pleading little face as a supplement to Lucretia's, and her timorous, "Please let Lucretia go," had no effect whatever.

"I don't approve of children's being out nights," said Aunt Lucretia, and Aunt Maria supported her. "There's no use talking," said she; "you can't go, Lucretia. Not another word. Take your things off, and sit down and sew your square of patchwork before supper. Almy,

you'd better run right home; I guess your mother'll be wanting you to help her." And Alma went.

"What made you bring that Ford girl in here to ask me?" Aunt Lucretia, who had seen straight through her namesake's artifice, asked of young Lucretia.

"I don't know," stammered Lucretia, over her patchwork.

"You'll never go anywhere any quicker for taking such means as that," said Aunt Lucretia.

"It would serve you right if we didn't let you go to the Christmas-tree," declared Aunt Maria, severely, and young Lucretia quaked. She had had the promise of going to the Christmas-tree for a long time. It would be awful if she should lose that. She sewed very diligently on her patchwork. A square a day was her stent, and she had held up before her the rapture and glory of a whole quilt made all by herself before she was ten years old.

Half an hour after tea she had the square all done. "I've got it done," said she, and she carried it over to her Aunt Lucretia, that it might be inspected.

Aunt Lucretia put on her spectacles and looked closely at it. "You've sewed it very well," she said, finally, in a tone of severe commendation. "You can sew well enough if you put your mind to it."

"That's what I've always told her," chimed in Aunt Maria. "There's no sense in her slighting her work so, and taking the kind of stitches she does sometimes. Now, Lucretia, it's time for you to go to bed."

Lucretia went lingeringly across the wide old sitting-room, then across the old wide dining-room, into the kitchen. It was quite a time before she got her candle lighted and came back, and then she stood about hesitatingly.

"What are you waiting for," Aunt Lucretia asked, sharply. "Take care; you're tipping your candle over; you'll get the grease on the carpet."

"Why don't you mind what you're doing?" said Aunt Maria.

Young Lucretia had scant encouragement to open upon the subject in her mind, but she did. "They're going to have lots of presents on the Christmas-tree," she remarked, tipping her candle again.

"Are you going to hold that candle straight or not?" cried Aunt Lucretia. "Who is going to have lots of presents?"

"All the other girls."

When the aunts got very much in earnest about anything they spoke with such vehement unison that it had the effect of a duet; it was difficult to tell which was uppermost. "Well, the other girls can have lots of presents; if their folks want to get presents for 'em they can," said they. "There's one thing about it, you won't get anything, and you needn't expect anything. I never approved of this giving presents Christmas, anyways. It's an awful tax an' a foolish piece of business."

Young Lucretia's lips quivered so she could hardly

speak. "They'll think—it's—so—funny if—I don't have anything," she said.

"Let 'em think it's funny if they want to. You take your candle an' go to bed, an' don't say any more about it. Mind you hold that candle straight."

Young Lucretia tried to hold the candle straight as she went upstairs, but it was hard work, her eyes were so misty with tears. Her little face was all puckered up with her silent crying as she trudged wearily up the stairs. It was a long time before she went to sleep that night. She cried first, then she meditated. Young Lucretia was too small and innocent to be artful, but she had a keen imagination, and was fertile of resource in emergencies. In the midst of her grief and disappointment she devolved a plan for keeping up the family honour, hers and her aunts, before the eyes of the school.

The next day everything favoured the plan. School did not keep; in the afternoon both the aunts went to the sewing society. They had been gone about an hour when young Lucretia trudged down the road with her arms full of parcels. She stole so quietly and softly into the school-house, where they were arranging the tree, that no one thought about it. She laid the parcels on a settee with some others, and stole out and flew home.

The festivities at the school-house began at seven o'clock. There were to be some exercises, some recitations and singing, then the distribution of the presents.

Directly after tea young Lucretia went up to her own chamber to get ready. She came down in a surprisingly short time all dressed.

"Are you all ready?" said Aunt Lucretia.

"Yes, ma'am," replied young Lucretia. She had her hand on the door-latch.

"I don't believe you are half-dressed," said Aunt Maria. "Did you get your bow on straight?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"I think she'd better take her things off, an' let us be sure," said Aunt Lucretia. "I'm not goin' to have her down there with her clothes on any which way, an' everybody making remarks. Take your sacque off, Lucretia."

"Oh, I got my bow on straight; it's real straight, it is, *honest*," protested young Lucretia, piteously. She clutched the plaid shawl tightly together, but it was of no use—off the things had to come. And young Lucretia had put on the prim whaleboned basque of her best dress wrong side before; she had buttoned it in the back. There she stood, very much askew and uncomfortable about the shoulder seams and sleeves, and hung her head before her aunts.

"Lucretia Raymond, what *do* you mean, putting your dress on this way?"

"All—the other—girls—wear—theirs buttoned in —the back."

"All the other girls! Well, you're not going to have yours buttoned in the back, and wear holes through that

nice ladies'-cloth coat every time you lean back against a chair. I should think you were crazy. I've a good mind not to let you go out at all. Stand round here!"

Young Lucretia's basque was sharply unbuttoned, she was jerked out of it, and it was turned around and fastened as it was meant to be. When she was finally started, with her aunts' parting admonition echoing after her, she felt sad and doubtful, but soon her merry disposition asserted itself.

There was no jollier and more radiant little soul than she all through the opening exercises. She listened to the speaking and the singing with the greatest appreciation and delight. She sat up perfectly straight in her prim, stiff basque; she folded her small red hands before her; her two tight braids inclined stiffly towards her ears, and her face was all aglow with smiles.

When the distribution of presents began her name was among the first to be called. She arose with alacrity, and went with a gay little prance down the aisle. She took the parcel that the teacher handed to her; she commenced her journey back, when she suddenly encountered the eyes of her Aunt Lucretia and her Aunt Maria. Then her terror and remorse began. She had never dreamed of such a thing as her aunts coming —indeed, they had not themselves. A neighbor had come in and persuaded them, and they had taken a sudden start against their resolutions and their principles.

Young Lucretia's name was called again and again. Every time she slunk more reluctantly and fearfully

down to the tree; she knew that her aunts' eyes were surveying her with more and more amazement.

After the presents were all distributed she sat perfectly still with hers around her. They lay on her desk, and the last was in her lap. She had not taken off a single wrapping. They were done up neatly in brown paper, and Lucretia's name was written on them.

Lucretia sat there. The other girls were in a hubbub of delight all around her, comparing their presents, but she sat perfectly still and watched her aunts coming. They came slowly; they stopped to speak to the teacher. Aunt Lucretia reached young Lucretia first.

"What have you got there?" she asked. She did not look cross, but a good deal surprised. Young Lucretia just gazed miserably at her. "Why don't you undo them?" asked Aunt Lucretia. Young Lucretia shook her head helplessly. "Why, what makes you act so, child?" cried Aunt Lucretia, getting alarmed. Then Aunt Maria came up, and there was quite a little group around young Lucretia. She began to cry. "What on earth ails the child?" said Aunt Lucretia. She caught up one of the parcels and opened it; it was a book bound in red and gold. She held it close to her eyes; she turned it this way and that; she examined the fly-leaf. "Why," said she, "it's the old gift-book Aunt Susan gave me when I was eighteen years old! What in the world!"

Aunt Maria had undone another. "This is the *Floral Album*," she said, tremulously; "we always keep it in

the north parlour on the table. Here's my name in it. I don't see—"

Aunt Lucretia speechlessly unmuffled a clove apple and a nautilus shell that had graced the parlour shelf, then a little daintily dressed rag doll with cheeks stained pink with cranberry juice appeared. When Lucretia spied this last she made a little grab at it.

"Oh," she sobbed, "somebody did hang this on for me! They did—they did! It's mine!"

It never seemed to young Lucretia that she walked going home that night; she had a feeling that only her tiptoes occasionally brushed the earth; she went on rapidly, with a tall aunt on either side. Not much was said. Once, in a lonely place in the road, there was a volley of severe questions from her aunts, and young Lucretia burst out into a desperate wail. "Oh!" she cried, "I was going to put 'em right back again, I was. I've not hurt 'em any. I was real careful. I didn't s'pose you'd know it. Oh, they said you were cross an' stingy, an' wouldn't hang me anything on the tree, an' I didn't want 'em to think you were. I wanted to make 'em think I had things, I did."

"What made you think of such a thing?"

"I don't know."

"I shouldn't think you would know. I never heard of such doings in my life!"

After they got home not much was said to young Lucretia; the aunts were still too much bewildered for

many words. Lucretia was bidden to light her candle and go to bed, and then came a new grief, which was the last drop in the bucket for her. They confiscated her new doll, and put it away in the parlour with the clove apple, the nautilus shell, and the gift-book. Then the little girl's heart failed her; remorse for she hardly knew what, terror, and the loss of the sole comfort that had come to her on this pitiful Christmas Eve were too much.

"Oh," she wailed, "my rag baby! my rag baby! I want my—rag baby. Oh! oh! oh! I want her, I want her!"

Scolding had no effect. Young Lucretia sobbed out her complaint all the way upstairs, and her aunts could distinguish the pitiful little wail of "my rag baby, I want my rag baby," after she was in her chamber.

The two women looked at each other. They had sat uneasily down by the sitting-room fire.

"I must say that I think you're rather hard on her, Lucretia," said Maria, finally.

"I don't know as I've been any harder on her than you have," returned Lucretia. "I shouldn't have said to take away that rag baby if I'd said just what I thought."

"I think you had better take it up to her then, and stop that crying," said Maria.

Lucretia hastened into the north parlour without another word. She carried the rag baby upstairs to young Lucretia; then she came down to the pantry and

got a seed-cake for her. "I thought the child had better have a little bite of something; she didn't eat scarcely a mite of supper," she explained to Maria. She had given young Lucretia's head a hard pat when she bestowed the seed-cake, and bade her eat it and go right to sleep. The little girl hugged her rag baby and ate her cooky in bliss.

The aunts sat a while longer by the sitting-room fire. Just before they left it for the night, Lucretia looked hesitatingly at Maria and said,

"I s'pose you have noticed that wax doll down to White's store, 'ain't you?"

"That big wax one with the pink dress?" asked Maria, faintly and consciously.

"Yes. There was a doll's bedstead there, too. I don't know as you noticed it."

"Yes, I think I did, now you speak of it. I noticed it the day I went for the calico. There was a doll baby's carriage there, too."

The aunts looked at each other. "I s'pose it would be dreadful foolish," said Lucretia.

"She'd be most too tickled to live," remarked Maria.

"Well, we can't buy 'em to-night, anyway," said Lucretia. "I must light the candle an' lock up."

The next day was Christmas. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when old Mrs. Emmons went up the road to the Raymond house. She had a little parcel. When she came into the sitting-room there was young Lucretia in a corner, so that the room should

not get in a mess, with her wealth around her. She looked forth, a radiant little mother of dolls, from the midst of her pretty miniature house-keeping.

"My sakes!" cried old Mrs. Emmons, "isn't that complete? She's got a big wax doll, an' a bedstead, an' a baby-carriage, an' a table an' bureau. I declare! Well, I don't know what I should have thought when I was a little girl. An' I've brought some pieces for you to make some more dresses for the rag baby, if you want to."

Young Lucretia's eyes shone.

"You were real kind to think of it," said Aunt Lucretia; "an' she'll take real comfort making the dresses. I'm real glad you came in, Mis' Emmons. I've been going down to see you for a long time. I want to see Ann, too; I thought I'd see if she hadn't got a pattern of a dress that buttons up the back for Lucretia."

Young Lucretia's eyes shone more than ever, and she smiled out of her corner like a little star.

SARAH ORNE JEWETT

(1849–1909)

The father of Sarah Orne Jewett was a country doctor in South Berwick, Maine, where she was born. He used to take her with him on his rounds, sitting beside him in the carriage, for her health was delicate, and she was often out of school. The life-stories of the countryside were part of her life as she was growing up, and when the scene began to appear in her stories, it was irradiated with sympathetic understanding. Rural Maine has changed and is changing—the automobile, rural free delivery and the professional summer-camp have come in since the day of *Deephaven* and *A Country Doctor*—but in these fair and friendly records the folks of Maine are here to stay.

It was Miss Jewett's fear that with all the meetings of summer boarders with country folks town and country might never understand one another; timid ladies would continue to take selectmen for tramps because they were in their shirtsleeves, and their own social advances would be in turn rejected as proud and patronizing. She meant to bridge this chasm; her art, delicate as it is, was not altogether for art's sake. She lived for a good part of her year in Boston and spent much time in England, where her books were warmly received, but

she never lost touch with the Country of the Pointed Firs. None but an understanding affection could so place before the reader the gallant old grasshopper of this story, and a northern wood-lot lies between its pages in which the kind old friends linger under their trees.

Willa Cather, in a literary sense her descendant, has edited a collection of *Best Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett* (Houghton) which makes a convenient approach for a new generation, but in their first form most of the volumes are still in print and in favor. The story of her rich and gentle life is told in her letters, edited by Annie Fields (Houghton).

THE COON DOG

From *The Queen's Twin and Other Stories*

I

In the early dusk of a warm September evening the bats were flitting to and fro, as if it were still Summer, under the great elm that overshadowed Isaac Brown's house, on the Dipford road. Isaac Brown himself, and his old friend and neighbor, John York, were leaning against the fence.

"Frost keeps off late, don't it?" said John York. "I laughed when I first heard about the circus comin'; I thought 't was so unusual late in the season. Turned out well, however. Everybody I noticed was returnin' with a palm-leaf fan. Guess they found 'em useful under the tent; it was a master hot day. I saw old lady Price with her hands full o' those free advertisin' fans, as if she was layin' in a stock against next summer. Well, I expect she'll live to enjoy 'em."

"I was right here where I'm standin' now, and I see her as she was goin' by this mornin'," said Isaac Brown, laughing and settling himself comfortably against the fence as if they had chanced upon a welcome subject of conversation. "I hailed her, same's I generally do. 'Where are you bound to-day, ma'am?' says I.

" 'I'm goin' over as fur as Dipford Centre,' says she.

'I'm goin' to see my poor dear 'Liza Jane. I want to 'suage her grief; her husband, Mr. 'Bijah Topliff, has passed away.'

" 'So much the better,' says I.

" 'No; I never l'arnt about it till yisterday,' says she; an' she looked up at me real kind of pleasant, and begun to laugh.

" 'I hear he's left property,' says she, tryin' to pull her face down solemn. I give her the fifty cents she wanted to borrow to make up her carfare and other expenses, an' she stepped off like a girl down tow'ds the depot.

"This afternoon, as you know, I'd promised the boys that I'd take 'em over to see the menagerie, and nothin' wouldn't do none of us any good but we must see the circus too; an' when we'd just got posted on one o' the best high seats, mother she nudged me, and I looked right down front two, three rows, an' if there wa'n't Mis' Price, spectacles an' all, with her head right up in the air, havin' the best time you ever see. I laughed right out. She hadn't taken no time to see 'Lizy Jane; she wa'n't 'suagin' no grief for nobody till she'd seen the circus. 'There,' says I, 'I do like to have anybody keep their young feelin's.' "

"Mis' Price come over to see our folks before breakfast," said John York. "Wife said she was inquirin' about the circus, but she wanted to know first if they couldn't oblige her with a few trinkets o'mournin', seein' as how she'd got to pay a mournin' visit. Wife

thought 'twas a bosom-pin, or somethin' like that, but turned out she wanted the skirt of a dress; 'most anything would do, she said."

"I thought she looked extra well startin' off," said Isaac, with an indulgent smile. "The Lord provides very handsome for such, I do declare! She ain't had no visible means o' support these ten or fifteen years back, but she don't freeze up in winter no more than we do."

"Nor dry up in summer," interrupted his friend; "I never did see such an able hand to talk."

"She's good company, and she's obliging an' useful when the women folks have their extra work progressin'," continued Isaac Brown kindly. " 'Tain't much for a well-off neighborhood like this to support that old chirpin' cricket. My mother used to say she kind of helped the work along by 'livenin' of it. Here she comes now; must have taken the last train, after she had supper with 'Lizy Jane. You stay still; we're goin' to hear all about it."

The small, thin figure of Mrs. Price had to be hailed twice before she could be stopped.

"I wish you a good evenin', neighbors," she said. "I have been to the house of mournin'."

"Find 'Liza Jane in, after the circus?" asked Isaac Brown, with equal seriousness. "Excellent show, wasn't it, for so late in the season?"

"Oh, beautiful; it was beautiful, I declare," answered the pleased spectator readily. "Why, I didn't see you, nor Mis' Brown. Yes; I felt it best to refresh my mind

an' wear a cheerful countenance. When I see 'Liza Jane I was able to divert her mind consid'able. She was glad I went. I told her I'd made an effort, knowin' 'twas so she had to lose the a'ternoon. 'Bijah left property, if he did die away from home on a foreign shore."

"You don't mean that 'Bijah Topliff's left anything!" exclaimed John York with interest, while Isaac Brown put both hands deep into his pockets, and leaned back in a still more satisfactory position against the gatepost.

"He enjoyed poor health," answered Mrs. Price, after a moment of deliberation, as if she must take time to think. " 'Bijah never was one that scattereth, nor yet increaseth. 'Liza Jane's got some memories o' the past that's a good deal better than others; but he died somewhere out in Connecticut, or so she heard, and he's left a very val'able coon dog,—one he set a great deal by. 'Liza Jane said, last time he was to home, he priced that dog at fifty dollars. 'There now, 'Liza Jane,' says I, right to her, when she told me, 'if I could git fifty dollars for that dog, I certain' would. Perhaps some o' the circus folks would like to buy him; they've taken in a stream o' money this day. But 'Liza Jane ain't never inclined to listen to advice. 'Tis a dreadful poor-spirited-lookin' creatur'. I don't want no right o' dower in him, myself."

"A good coon dog's worth somethin', certain," said John York, handsomely.

"If he *is* a good coon dog," added Isaac Brown. "I

wouldn't have parted with old Rover, here, for a good deal of money when he was right in his best days; but a dog like him's like one of the family. Stop an' have some supper, won't ye, Mis' Price?"—as the thin old creature was flitting off again. At that same moment this kind invitation was repeated from the door of the house; and Mrs. Price turned in, unprotesting and always sociably inclined, at the open gate.

II

It was a month later, and a whole autumn's length colder, when the two men were coming home from a long tramp through the woods. They had been making a solemn inspection of a wood-lot that they owned together, and had now visited their landmarks and outer boundaries, and settled the great question of cutting or not cutting some large pines. When it was well decided that a few years' growth would be no disadvantage to the timber, they had eaten an excellent cold luncheon and rested from their labors.

"I don't feel a day older'n I ever did when I get out in the woods this way," announced John York, who was a prim, dusty-looking little man, a prudent person, who had been selectman of the town at least a dozen times.

"No more do I," agreed his companion, who was large and jovial and open-handed, more like a lucky sea-captain than a farmer. After pounding a slender walnut-tree with a heavy stone, he had succeeded in

getting down a pocketful of late-hanging nuts, and was now snapping them back, one by one, to a venturesome chipmunk among some little frost-bitten beeches. Isaac Brown had a wonderfully pleasant way of getting on with all sorts of animals, even men. After a while they rose and went their way, these two companions, stopping here and there to look at a possible woodchuck's hole, or to strike a few hopeful blows at a hollow tree with the light axe which Isaac had carried to blaze new marks on some of the line-trees on the farther edge of their possessions. Sometimes they stopped to admire the size of an old hemlock, or to talk about thinning out the young pines. At last they were not very far from the entrance to the great tract of woodland. The yellow sunshine came slanting in much brighter against the tall tree trunks, spotting them with golden light high among the still branches.

Presently they came to a great ledge, frost-split and cracked into mysterious crevices.

"Here's where we used to get all the coons," said John York. "I haven't seen a coon this great while, spite o' your courage knocking on the trees up back here. You know that night we got the four fat ones? We started 'em somewheres near here, so the dog could get after 'em when they came out at night to go foragin'."

"Hold on, John"; and Mr. Isaac Brown got up from the log where he had just sat down to rest, and went to the ledge, and looked carefully all about. When he

came back he was much excited, and beckoned his friend away, speaking in a stage whisper.

"I guess you'll see a coon before you're much older," he exclaimed. "I've thought it looked lately as if there'd been one about my place, and there's plenty o' signs here, right in their old haunts. Couple o' hen's heads an' a lot o' feathers—"

"Might be a fox," interrupted John York.

"Might be a coon," answered Mr. Isaac Brown. "I'm goin' to have him, too. I've been lookin' at every old hollow tree I passed, but I never thought o' this place. We'll come right off to-morrow night, I guess, John, an' see if we can't get him. 'Tis an extra handy place for 'em to den; in old times the folks always called it a good place; they've been so scarce o' these late years that I've thought little about 'em. Nothin' I ever liked so well as a coon-hunt. Gorry! he must be a big old fellow, by his tracks! See here, in this smooth dirt; just like a baby's footmark."

"Trouble is, we lack a good dog," said John York anxiously, after he had made an eager inspection. "I don't know where in the world to get one, either. There ain't no such a dog about as your Rover, but you've let him get spoilt; these days I don't see him leave the yard. You ought to keep the women-folks from overfeedin' of him so. He ought to have lasted a good spell longer. He's no use for huntin' now, that's certain."

Isaac accepted the rebuke meekly. John York was a

calm man, but he now grew very fierce under such a provocation. Nobody likes to be hindered in a coon-hunt.

"Oh, Rover's too old, anyway," explained the affectionate master regretfully. "I've been wishing all this afternoon I'd brought him; but I didn't think anything about him as we came away, I've got so used to seeing him layin' about the yard. 'Twould have been a real treat for old Rover, if he could have kept up. Used to be at my heels the whole time. He couldn't follow us, anyway, up here."

"I shouldn't wonder if he could," insisted John, with a humorous glance at his old friend, who was much too heavy and huge of girth for quick transit over rough ground. John York himself had grown lighter as he had grown older.

"I'll tell you one thing we could do," he hastened to suggest. "There's that dog of 'Bijah Topliff's. Don't you know the old lady told us, that day she went over to Dipford, how high he was valued? Most o' 'Bijah's important business was done in the fall, goin' out by night, gunning with fellows from the mills. He was just the kind of a worthless do-nothing that's sure to have an extra knowin' smart dog. I expect 'Liza Jane's got him now. Let one o' my boys go over!"

"Why, 'Liza Jane's come, bag and baggage, to spend the winter with her mother," exclaimed Isaac Brown, springing to his feet like a boy. "I've had it in mind to

tell you, two or three times this afternoon, and then something else has flown it out of my head. I let my John Henry take the long-tailed wagon an' go down to the depot this mornin' to fetch her an' her goods up. The old lady come in early, while we were to breakfast, and to hear her lofty talk you'd have thought 't would taken a couple o' four-horse teams to move her. I told John Henry he might take that wagon and fetch up what light stuff he could, and see how much else there was, an' then I could make further arrangements. She said 'Liza Jane'd see me well satisfied, an' rode off, pleased to death. I see 'em returnin' about eight, after the train was in. They'd got 'Liza Jane with 'em, smaller'n ever; and there was a trunk tied up with a rope, and a small roll of beddin' and braided mats, and a quilted rockin'-chair. The old lady was holdin' on tight to a bird-cage with nothin' in it. Yes; an' I see the dog, too, in behind. He appeared kind of timid. He's a yaller dog, but he ain't stump-tailed. They hauled up out front o' the house, and mother and I went right out; Mis' Price always expects to have notice taken. She was in great spirits. Said 'Liza Jane concluded to sell off most of her stuff rather'n have the care of it. She'd told the folks that Mis' Topliff had a beautiful sofa and a lot of nice chairs, and two framed pictures that would fix up the house complete, and invited us all to come over and see 'em. There, she seemed just as pleased returnin' with the bird-cage.

Disappointments don't appear to trouble her no more than a butterfly. I kind of like the old creatur'; I don't mean to see her want."

"They'll let us have the dog," said John York. "I don't know but I'll give a quarter for him, and we'll let 'em have a good piece o' the coon."

"You really comin' 'way up here by night, coon-huntin'?" asked Isaac Brown, looking reproachfully at his more agile companion.

"I be," answered John York.

"I was dre'tful afraid you was only talking, and might back out," returned the cheerful heavy-weight, with a chuckle. "Now we've got things all fixed, I feel more like it than ever. I tell you, there's just boy enough left inside of me. I'll clean up my old gun to-morrow mornin' and you look right after your'n. I dare say the boys have took good care of 'em for us, but they don't know what we do about huntin', and we'll bring 'em all along and show 'em a little fun."

"All right," said John York, as soberly as if they were going to look after a piece of business for the town; and they gathered up the axe and other light possessions, and started toward home.

III

The two friends, whether by accident or design, came out of the woods some distance from their own houses, but very near to the low-storied little gray dwelling of Mrs. Price. They crossed the pasture, and climbed over

the toppling fence at the foot of her small sandy piece of land, and knocked at the door. There was a light already in the kitchen. Mrs. Price and Eliza Jane Topliff appeared at once, eagerly hospitable.

"Anybody sick?" asked Mrs. Price, with instant sympathy. "Nothin' happened, I hope?"

"Oh, no," said both the men.

"We came to talk about hiring your dog to-morrow night," explained Isaac Brown, feeling for the moment amused at his eager errand. "We got on track of a coon just now, up in the woods, and we thought we'd give our boys a little treat. You shall have fifty cents, an' welcome, and a good piece o' the coon."

"Yes, Square Brown; we can let you have the dog as well as not," interrupted Mrs. Price, delighted to grant a favor. "Poor departed 'Bijah, he set everything by him as a coon dog. He always said a dog's capital was all in his reputation."

"You'll have to be dreadful careful an' not lose him," urged Mrs. Topliff. "Yes, sir; he's a proper coon dog as ever walked the earth, but he's terrible weak-minded about followin' 'most anybody. 'Bijah used to travel off twelve or fourteen miles after him to git him back, when he wa'n't able. Somebody'd speak to him decent, or fling a whip-lash as they drove by, an' off he'd canter on three legs right after the wagon. But 'Bijah said he wouldn't trade him for no coon dog he ever was acquainted with. Trouble is, coons is awful sca'ce."

"I guess he ain't out of practice," said John York, amiably; "I guess he'll know when he strikes the coon. Come, Isaac, we must be gittin' along tow'ds home. I feel like eatin' a good supper. You tie him up to-morrow afternoon, so we shall be sure to have him," he turned to say to Mrs. Price, who stood smiling at the door.

"Land sakes, dear, he won't git away; you'll find him right there betwixt the wood-box and the stove, where he is now. Hold the light, 'Liza Jane; they can't see their way out to the road. I'll fetch him over to ye in good season," she called out, by way of farewell; " 't will save ye third of a mile extra walk. No, 'Liza Jane, you'll let me do it, if you please. I've got a mother's heart. The gentlemen will excuse us for showin' feelin'. You're all the child I've got, an' your prosperity is the same as mine."

IV

The great night of the coon-hunt was frosty and still, with only a dim light from the new moon. John York and his boys, and Isaac Brown, whose excitement was very great, set forth across the fields toward the dark woods. The men seemed younger and gayer than the boys. There was a burst of laughter when John Henry Brown and his little brother appeared with the coon dog of the late Mr. Abijah Topliff, which had promptly run away home again after Mrs. Price had

coaxed him over in the afternoon. The captors had tied a string round his neck, at which they pulled vigorously from time to time to urge him forward. Perhaps he found the night too cold; at any rate, he stopped short in the frozen furrows every few minutes, lifting one foot and whining a little. Half a dozen times he came near to tripping up Mr. Isaac Brown and making him fall at full length.

"Poor Tiger! poor Tiger!" said the good-natured sportsman, when somebody said that the dog didn't act as if he were much used to being out at night. "He'll be all right when he once gets track of the coon." But when they were fairly in the woods, Tiger's distress was perfectly genuine. The long rays of light from the old-fashioned lanterns of pierced tin went wheeling round and round, making a tall ghost of every tree, and strange shadows went darting in and out behind the pines. The woods were like an interminable pillared room where the darkness made a high ceiling. The clean frosty smell of the open fields was changed for a warmer air, damp with the heavy odor of moss and fallen leaves. There was something wild and delicious in the forest at that hour of night. The men and boys tramped on silently in single file, as if they followed the flickering light instead of carrying it. The dog fell back by instinct, as did his companions, into the easy familiarity of forest life. He ran beside them, and watched eagerly as they chose a safe place to leave

a coat or two and a basket. He seemed to be an affectionate dog, now that he had made acquaintance with his masters.

"Seems to me he don't exactly know what he's about," said one of the York boys scornfully; "we must have struck that coon's track somewhere, comin' in."

"We'll get through talkin', an' heap up a little somethin' for a fire, if you'll turn to and help," said his father. "I've always noticed that nobody can give so much good advice about a piece o' work as a new hand. When you've treed as many coons as your Uncle Brown an' me, you won't feel so certain. Isaac, you be the one to take the dog up round the ledge, there. He'll scent the coon quick enough then. We'll 'tend to this part o' the business."

"You may come too, John Henry," said the indulgent father,—and they set off together silently with the coon dog. He followed well enough now; his tail and ears were drooping even more than usual, but he whimpered along as bravely as he could, much excited, at John Henry's heels, like one of those great soldiers who are all unnerved until the battle is well begun.

A minute later the father and son came hurrying back, breathless, and stumbling over roots and bushes. The fire was already lighted, and sending a great glow higher and higher among the trees.

"He's off! He's struck a track! He was off like a major!" wheezed Mr. Isaac Brown.

"Which way'd he go?" asked everybody.

"Right out towards the fields. Like's not the old fellow was just starting after more of our fowls. I'm glad we come early,—he can't have got far yet. We can't do nothin' but wait now, boys. I'll set right down here."

"Soon as the coon trees, you'll hear the dog sing, now I tell you!" said John York, with great enthusiasm. "That night your father an' me got those four busters we've told you about, they come right back here to the ledge. I don't know but they will now. 'Twas a dreadful cold night, I know. We didn't get home till past three o'clock in the mornin', either. You remember, don't you, Isaac?"

"I do," said Isaac. "How old Rover worked that night! Couldn't see out of his eyes nor hardly wag his clever old tail, for two days; thorns in both his fore paws, and the last coon took a piece right out of his off shoulder."

"Why didn't you let Rover come to-night, father?" asked the younger boy. "I think he knew somethin' was up. He was jumpin' 'round at a great rate when I come out of the yard."

"I didn't know but he might make trouble for the other dog," answered Isaac, after a moment's silence. He felt almost disloyal to the faithful creature, and had been missing him all the way. "'Sh! there's a bark!" And they all stopped to listen.

The fire was leaping higher; they all sat near it, listening and talking by turns. There is apt to be a good deal of waiting in a coon-hunt.

"If Rover was young as he used to be, I'd resk him to tree any coon that ever run," said the regretful master. "This smart creature o' Topliff's can't beat him, I know. The poor old fellow's eye-sight seems to be going. Two—three times he's run out at me right in broad day, an' barked when I come up the yard toward the house, and I did pity him dreadfully; he was so 'shamed when he found out what he'd done. Rover's a dog that's got an awful lot o' pride. He went right off out behind the long barn the last time, and wouldn't come in for nobody when they called him to supper till I went out myself and made it up with him. No; he can't see very well now, Rover can't."

"He's heavy, too; he's got too unwieldy to tackle a smart coon, I expect, even if he could do the tall runnin'," said John York, with sympathy. "They have to get a master grip with their teeth, through a coon's thick pelt this time o' year. No; the young folks gets all the good chances after a while;" and he looked round indulgently at the chubby faces of his boys, who fed the fire, and rejoiced in being promoted to the society of their elders on equal terms. "Ain't it time we heard from the dog?" And they all listened, while the fire snapped and the sap whistled in some green sticks.

"I hear him," said John Henry suddenly; and faint and far away there came the sound of a desperate bark.

There is a bark that means attack and there is a bark that means only foolish excitement.

"They ain't far off!" said Isaac. "My gracious, he's right after him! I don't know's I expected that poor-looking dog to be so smart. You can't tell by their looks. Quick as he scented the game up here in the rocks, off he put. Perhaps it ain't any matter if they ain't stump-tailed, long 's they're yaller dogs. He didn't look heavy enough to me. I tell you, he means business. Hear that bark!"

"They all bark alike after a coon," John York was as excited as anybody. "Git the guns laid out to hand, boys; I told you we'd ought to follow," he commanded. "If it's the old fellow that belongs here, he may put in any minute." But there was again a long silence and state of suspense; the chase had turned another way. There were faint distant yaps. The fire burned low and fell together with a shower of sparks. The smaller boys began to grow chilly and sleepy, when there was a thud and rustle and snapping of twigs close at hand, then the gasp of a breathless dog. Two dim shapes rushed by; a shower of bark fell, and a dog began to sing at the foot of the great twisted pine not fifty feet away.

"Hooray for Tiger!" yelled the boys; but the dog's voice filled all the woods. It might have echoed to the mountain tops. There was the old coon; they could all see him half-way up the tree, flat to the great limb. They heaped the fire with dry branches till it flared

high. Now they lost him in a shadow as he twisted about the tree. John York fired, and Isaac Brown fired, while John Henry started to climb a neighboring oak; but at last it was Isaac who brought the coon to ground with a lucky shot, and the dog stopped his deafening bark and frantic leaping in the underbrush, and after an astonishing moment of silence, crept out, a proud victor, to his prouder master's feet.

"Goodness alive, who's this? Good for you, old handsome! Why, I'll be hanged if it ain't old Rover, boys; *it's old Rover!*" But Isaac could not speak another word. They all crowded round the wistful, clumsy old dog, whose eyes shone bright, though his breath was all gone. Each man patted him, and praised him, and said they ought to have mistrusted all the time that it could be nobody but he. It was some minutes before Isaac Brown could trust himself to do anything but pat the sleek old head that was always ready to his hand.

"He must have overheard us talkin'; I guess he'd have come if he'd dropped dead half-way," proclaimed John Henry, like a prince of the reigning house; and Rover wagged his tail as if in honest assent, as he lay at his master's side. They sat together, while the fire was brightened again to make a good light for the coon-hunt supper; and Rover had a good half of everything that found its way into his master's hand. It was toward midnight when the triumphal procession set

forth toward home, with the two lanterns, across the fields.

V

The next morning was bright and warm after the hard frost of the night before. Old Rover was asleep on the doorstep in the sun, and his master stood in the yard, and saw neighbor Price come along the road in her best array, with a gay holiday air.

"Well, now," she said eagerly, "you wa'n't out very late last night, was you? I got up myself to let Tiger in. He come home, all beat out, about a quarter past nine. I expect you hadn't no kind of trouble gittin' the coon. The boys was tellin' me he weighed 'most thirty pounds."

"Oh, no kind o' trouble," said Isaac, keeping the great secret gallantly. "You got the things I sent over this morning?"

"Bless your heart, yes! I'd a sight rather have all that good pork an' potatoes than any o' your wild meat," said Mrs. Price, smiling with prosperity. "You see, now, 'Liza Jane she's given in. She didn't re'lly know but 't was all talk of 'Bijah 'bout that dog's bein' wuth fifty dollars. She says she can't cope with a huntin' dog same 's he could, an' she 's given me the money you an' John York sent over this mornin'; an' I didn't know but what you'd lend me another half a dollar, so I could both go to Dipford Centre an' return, an' see

if I couldn't make a sale o' Tiger right over there where they all know about him. It's right in the coon season; now's my time, ain't it?"

"Well, gettin' a little late," said Isaac, shaking with laughter as he took the desired sum of money out of his pocket. "He seems to be a clever dog round the house."

"I don't know 's I want to harbor him all winter," answered the excursionist frankly, striking into a good traveling gait as she started off toward the railroad station.

JACOB ABBOTT
(1803–1879)

"Where do knives and forks come from?"

"They come from England. A ship brings them across the ocean more than a thousand miles to Boston. Then a wagoner puts them in his wagon and brings them over the hills and over the valleys to the town we live in, all that little Rollo may have a knife and fork to eat his breakfast."

. . . and with the words, the world of a little boy north of Boston, A. D. 1840, rises for a moment out of the past.

It was a quiet little world in which Jacob Abbott's Rollo learned about life, but it was a wholesome life; one of refinement, even of distinction. Work was at the basis of everything, even for children, but work meant making something with your own hands, generally out-of-doors, but at least with a view from the window, making something for some use and with some dignity. The family system was patriarchal, and obedience was taken for granted; but Jacob Abbott not only loved his children, he respected them. His son Lyman said that he wrote out of his respect for children.

He wrote no less than two hundred volumes of one sort and another. Twenty-eight were Rollo Books; the Franconia stories about Beechnut and Malleville and Phonny are still fragrant as dried fern; *Gentle Measures in the Management*

and Training of the Young holds more than historical value. In his stories for children one incident leads serenely into another without hurry and without break; when the boys finish their adventure with the steeple trap "the fender was put back in its place in the garret, the bowl in the house, and the box in the barn." One sees an American home of the forties, not in flashes of inspiration, but under a steady, gentle light. It is the home of gentle folk.

Jacob Abbott was born in 1803 and lived to be seventy-six. He went to Andover at seventeen and was ordained, but before beginning to preach filled for four years the chair of mathematics at Amherst, founded four years before. In 1839 he moved to Farmington, Maine, Rollo's scene; he travelled abroad, and so did his young hero, but their fame rests upon the books that have left us so admirable a picture of Yankee life.

THE STEEPLE TRAP

From *Rollo at Play*

The afternoon of the day when Rollo and his cousin James made their wigwam in the woods by the brook, they were at work there again, employed very harmoniously together, in finishing their edifice, when suddenly Jonas, who was at work in the woods at a little distance, heard them both calling to him, in tones of surprise and pleasure.

"O, Jonas, Jonas, come here quick—quick."

Jonas dropped his axe and ran.

When he got near them, they pointed to a log.

"See there; see;—see there."

"What is it?" said Jonas. "O, I see it," said he.

It was a little squirrel clambering up a raspberry bush, eating the raspberries as he went along. He would climb up by the little branches, and pull in the raspberries in succession, until he got to the topmost one, when the bush would bend over with his weight until it almost touched the log.

"Let us catch him," said Rollo, very eagerly; "do let us catch him; I will go and get our steeple trap."

Jonas did not seem to be so very much delighted as the boys were. He said he was certainly a cunning little

fellow, but "what should we do with him if we should catch him?"

"O," said Rollo, "we would put him in a little cage. It would be so complete to have him in a cage! Do, Jonas, do."

"But you have not got any cage."

"We can get one," said James. "We can buy one with our half-dollars."

"Well," said Jonas, "it would do no good to set the trap now, for he will be away before we could get back. But I will come down to-night, and set the trap, and perhaps we shall catch him, though I do not exactly like to do it."

"Why?" said the boys.

"O," said Jonas, "he will not like to be shut up all night, in a dark box, and then be imprisoned in a cage. He had rather run about here and gather raspberries. Besides, you would soon get tired of him if you had him in a cage."

"Oh no," said Rollo, "I should not get tired of him."

"Did you ever have any plaything that you were not tired of before long?"

"Why,—no," said Rollo; "but then a real live squirrel is a different thing. Besides, you know, if I get tired of him, I need not play with him then."

"No, but a real live thing must be fed every day, and *that* you would find a great trouble. And then you would sometimes forget it, and the poor fellow would be half starved."

"O no," said Rollo, "I am sure I should not forget it."

"Did you remember your reading-lesson this morning?"

"Why,—no," said Rollo, looking a little confused. "But I am sure I should not forget to feed a squirrel if I had one."

"You don't know as much as I thought you did," replied Jonas.

"Why?"

"I thought you knew more about yourself than to suppose you could be trusted to do anything regularly every day. Why, you would not remember to wash your own face every morning, if your mother did not remind you. The squirrel is almost as fit to take care of you in your wigwam, as you are to take care of him in a cage."

Rollo felt a little ashamed of his boasting, for he knew that what Jonas said was true. Jonas said, finally,

"However, we will try to catch him; but I cannot promise that I shall let you keep him in a cage. It will be bad enough for him to be shut up all night in the box trap, but I can pay him for that the next day in corn."

So Jonas brought down the box trap that night. It was a long box, about as big as a cricket, with a tall, pointed back, which looked like a steeple; so Rollo called it the steeple trap. It was so made that if the

squirrel should go in, and begin to nibble some corn, which they were going to put in there, it would make the cover come down and shut him in. They fixed the trap on the end of the log, and Jonas observed, as he sat on the log, that he could see the barn chamber window through a little opening among the trees. Of course he knew that from the barn chamber window he could see the trap, though it would be too far off to see it plain.

Early the next morning, James came over to learn whether they had caught the squirrel; and he and Rollo wanted Jonas to go down with them and see. Jonas said he could not go down then very well, but if he would go and ask his father to lend him his spy-glass, he could tell without going down.

Now Jonas had been a very faithful and obedient boy, ever since he came to live with Rollo's father. He had some great faults when he first came, but he had cured himself of them, and he was now an excellent and trustworthy boy. It was a part of his business to take care of Rollo, and they always let him have what he asked for from the house, as they knew it was for some good purpose, and that it would be well taken care of. So when Rollo went in and asked for the spy-glass, and said that Jonas wanted it, they handed it down to him at once.

Jonas took the glass, and they all three went up into the barn chamber.

Jonas opened the glass, and held it up to his eye.

The boys stood by, looking on silently. At length, Jonas said,

"No, we have not caught him."

"How do you know?" said the boys.

"O, I can see the trap, and it is not sprung."

"Is not sprung?" said James, "what do you mean by *sprung?*"

"Shut. It is not shut. I can see it open, and of course the squirrel is not there."

"O, he may be in," said Rollo, "just nibbling the corn. Do let us go and see!"

Jonas smiled, and said he could not go then, but he would look through the spy-glass again towards noon. He then gave the glass to Rollo, and it was carried back safely into the house.

James soon after went home, and Rollo sat down in the parlour to his reading. Afterwards he came out, and went to building cities in a sandy corner of the garden. He was making Rome,—for his father had told him that Rome was built on seven hills, and he liked to make the seven hills in the sand. He made a long channel for an aqueduct, and went into the house to get a dipper of water to fill his aqueduct, when he met James coming again. So they went in, and got the spy-glass, and asked Jonas to go up and look again.

Jonas adjusted the glass, held it up to his eye, and looked some time in silence, and then said,

"Yes, it is sprung, I believe. Yes, it is certainly sprung."

"O, then we have caught him," said the boys, capering about. "Let us go and see."

"Perhaps we have caught him," said Jonas, "but it is not certain; sometimes the trap gets sprung accidentally. However, you may go and ask your father if he thinks it worth while for me to leave my work long enough to go down and see."

Rollo came back with the permission granted, and they all set off; Rollo and James running on eagerly before.

When they came to the trap, they found it shut. Jonas took it up, and tipped it one way and the other, and listened. He heard something moving in it, but did not know whether it was anything more than the corn cob. Then he said he would open the trap a very little, and let Rollo peep in.

He did so. Rollo said it looked all dark; he could not see anything. Then Jonas opened it a little farther, and Rollo saw two little shining eyes, and presently a nose smelling along at the crack.

"Yes, here he is, here he is," said Rollo; "look at him, James, look at him;—see, see."

They all peeped at him, and then Jonas took the box under his arm and they all returned home.

Jonas told the boys he was not willing to keep the squirrel a prisoner very long, but he would try to contrive some way by which they might look at him. Now, there was, in the garret, a small fire-fender, which had been laid aside as old and useless. Jonas recollected this,

and thought he could fix up a temporary cage with it. So he took a small box about as large as a raisin box, which he found in the barn, and laid it down on its side, so as to turn the open side towards the trap, and then moved the trap close up to it. He then covered up all the rest of the open part of the box with shingles, and asked James and Rollo to hold them on. Then he carefully lifted up the cover of the trap, and made a rattling in the back part of it with the spindle. This drove the squirrel through out of the trap into the box.

When Jonas was sure that he was in, he took the old fender and slid it down very cautiously between the trap and the box, so as to cover the open part entirely, and make a sort of grated front, like a cage. Then he took the trap away, and there the little nut-cracker was, safely imprisoned but yet fairly exposed to view.

That is, they *thought* he was safely imprisoned; but he, little rogue, had no idea of submitting without first giving his bolts and bars a try. At first, he crept along, with his tail curled over his back, in a corner, and looked at the strange faces that surrounded him. "Let us give him a little corn," said Rollo; "perhaps he is hungry"; and he was just slipping some kernels in between the wires of the fender, when Bunny sprang forward, and, with a jump and a squeeze, forced his slender body between two of the wires that were bent a little apart, leaped down upon the barn floor, ran along to the corner, up the post, and then crept leisurely along on a beam. . . .

He soon began to run along on the beam; then he ascended to the scaffold, and made his way towards an open window. He jumped up to the window-sill, and then disappeared. The boys all ran around, outside, and were just in time to catch a glimpse of him, running along on the top of the fence, down towards the wood again.

"Do let us run after him and catch him," said Rollo.

"Catch him!" said Jonas, with a laugh. "You might as well catch the wind. No, the only way is to set our trap for him again. I meant to let him go, myself; but he is not going to slip through our fingers in that way, I tell him." So Jonas went down that night and set the trap again . . .

[*and at last they get him* . . .]

Jonas said, at last,

"On the whole, I believe I will let you keep him, but you must do it in my way."

"What is your way?"

"Why, after a day or two, we must carry him back to his raspberry bush, and let him go. But you may give him a name, and call him yours, and you can carry some corn down there now and then, to feed him with,—and then you will see him, occasionally, playing about there."

James and Rollo did not exactly like this plan at first, but when they considered how much better the little squirrel himself would like it, they adopted it; and

Rollo proposed that they should tie a string round his neck for a collar, so that they might know him again.

"I can get mother to let me have a little pink riband," said he, "and that will be beautiful."

"It would be a good plan," said Jonas, "to mark him in some way, but he might gnaw off the riband."

"O no," said James, "he could not gnaw anything on his own neck." Rollo thought so too, and they both tried to bite their own collar ribands by way of showing Jonas how impossible it was.

"I don't know exactly what are the limits of a squirrel's gnawing," said Jonas. "Perhaps he might tear it off with his claws."

"Or he might get another squirrel to gnaw it off for him," said James.

"Yes," said Jonas, "and there is another difficulty. He might be jumping from one tree to another, and catch his collar in some little branch, and so get hung, without judge or jury."

"What can we do then?" said Rollo.

"I think," said Jonas, "that the best plan would be to dye the end of his tail black. That would not hurt him any; and yet, as he always holds his tail up, we should see it, and know him."

The boys both thought this would be excellent, and Jonas said he had some black dye, which he had made for dyeing some wood. . . .

"I am not certain," said Jonas, "that my dye will

colour hair; I never tried it, except on wood. Do you think that black would be a pretty colour?"

"No," said Rollo, "black would not be a very pretty colour, but it would do. Yellow, and red, and green, are pretty colours, but black, and brown, and white, are not pretty at all."

"I have not got any yellow, or red, or green," said Jonas, "I don't know but that I have got a little blue."

"O, blue would be beautiful," said James.

Then Jonas walked along into the barn, and Rollo and James followed him. He went up stairs, and walked along to the farthest corner, and there, up on a beam, were several small bottles all in a row. Jonas took down one, and shook it, and said that was the blue.

He brought it down to the cage; Rollo went into the house, and brought out an old bowl, and Jonas prepared to pour out the dye into it. They then concluded that they would carry the whole apparatus down into the edge of the woods, and perform the operation there; and then the squirrel, when he was liberated, would easily find his way back to his home. Jonas carried down a pair of thick, old gloves, to keep the squirrel from biting him.

As they walked along, Rollo proposed that Jonas should dip the squirrel's ears in as well as his tail; "because," said he, "we may sometimes see him when he is half hid in the bushes, so that only his head is in sight."

"Besides," said James, "it will make him look more beautiful if his ears and tail are both blue."

Jonas did not object to this, and after a short time they reached the edge of the woods. They found a little opening, where the ground was smooth and the grass green, which seemed exactly the place for them. So they put down the cage and the bowl of dye, and Jonas began to put on his glove.

"Now, boys," said he, "you must be still as moonlight while I do it. If you speak to me you will put me out; and besides, you will frighten little Bunny."

The boys promised not to speak a single word; and Jonas, after unfastening the fender from the front of the box, moved it along until there was an opening large enough for him to get his hand in. . . . When the squirrel saw Jonas's hand intruding itself into the box, he retreated to the farther corner, and curled himself up there, with his tail close down upon his back. Jonas followed him with his hand, saying, in a soothing tone,

"Bunny, Bunny, poor little Bunny."

He reached him, at length, and put his hand very gently over him, and slowly and cautiously drew him out.

Rollo and James gave a sort of hysterical laugh and instantly clapped their hands to their mouths, to suppress it; but they looked at one another and at Jonas with great delight.

Jonas gradually brought the squirrel over the bowl, and prepared to dip his ears into the dye. It was a strange situation for a squirrel to be in, and he did not like it at

all; and just at the instant when his ears were going into the dye, he twisted his head round, and planted his little fore teeth directly upon Jonas's thumb. As might have been supposed, teeth which were sharp and powerful enough to go through a walnut shell, would not be likely to be stopped by a leathern glove; and Jonas, startled by the sudden cut, gave a twitch with his hand, and, at the same instant, let go of the squirrel. Bunny grasped the edge of the bowl with his paws, and leaped out, bringing the bowl itself at the same instant over upon him, spattering him all over from head to tail with the blue dye.

The boys looked aghast for a minute, but when they saw him racing off as fast as possible, and running up a neighboring tree, Jonas burst into a laugh, which the other boys joined, and they continued it loud and long, till the woods rang again.

"Well, we have spotted him, at any rate," said Jonas. "We will call him Leopard."

As they were walking home, James said that the squirrel's back looked *wet*, where the dye went upon him, but he did not think it looked very *blue*.

"No," said Jonas, "it does not generally look blue at first, but it grows blue afterwards. It will be a bright colour enough before you see him again, I will warrant."

So they walked along home; the fender was put back in its place in the garret, the bowl in the house, and the box in the barn. Jonas soon forgot that he had been bit-

ten, and the squirrel, as soon as his back was dry, thought no more of the whole affair, but turned his attention entirely to the business of digging a hole to store his nuts in for the coming winter.

JAMES K. PAULDING

(1779–1860)

When James K. Paulding, together with his brother William and young Washington Irving, set about conducting the miscellany *Salmagundi*, he made for himself a place in all the textbooks on American literature, for the renown of that light-hearted undertaking did not cease with the last of the twenty numbers that so amused New York. But he is always named in these textbooks not as an individual but as one of a coterie, and, as Professor Trent expresses it, in spite of his real talents, which made him Secretary of the Navy in Van Buren's cabinet, he was never able completely to emerge from the shadows cast upon him by the fame of the two chief Knickerbocker writers, Irving and Cooper, both his juniors. One has but to compare "Cobus Jenks," in his *Tales of the Good Woman*, with the story by Irving in the same *genre*, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," to decide that posterity has not been wrong in its choice. But everyone in the United States who reads at all has read Irving's tale of Ichabod Crane and Rip Van Winkle, and need not turn to a collection like this to find either of them in print. It is less easy to discover the following example of Paulding's satire, "one of those squibs which he was continually firing off in honor of what he re-

garded as the absurdities of the passing hour," to use his brother's phrase. It is taken from *The Book of St. Nicholas* "translated from the original Dutch of Dominie Nicholas Aegidius Oudenarde," dedicated to the Societies of Saint Nicholas in the New Netherlands, and adding to its hoaxing title a demure "author's advertisement" purporting to tell how the tales came to be written.

It is the only story in this collection frankly and fantastically satiric; even the names are those of a "morality." But the spirit, while one of mockery, is in itself significant and possessed of value to the student of our social history. It was for a long time to characterize the novels and the plays—like Anna Cora Mowatt's *Fashion*—that described the growing power of wealth in New York City, the rise of the *parvenu*, and more especially the gradual submergence of the Knickerbocker aristocracy beneath the golden flood. It was to appear in novels as late as those of Constance Cary Harrison at the turn of the century, and even in some of those of Mrs. Wharton.

In spite of the efforts of the patron saint of New York, I fear that some of the references to old times in that city may need explanation to the present generation. When I was a little girl and my family moved from New England to Communipaw, it was still possible—at church suppers—to call for oly koeks and get delicious fried cakes made by local housewives. But Saint Nicholas himself would have some difficulty in finding them now; Spuyten Duyvil is no more than a ship canal, and the New Year's calls that were to have lasted as long as New York now pass as quietly as a Noiseless Fourth.

THE REVENGE OF SAINT NICHOLAS

A TALE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

From *The Book of Saint Nicholas*

EVERYBODY knows that, in the famous city of New York, whose proper name is Nieuw Amsterdam, the excellent St. Nicholas—who is worth a dozen St. Georges, with dragons to boot, and who, if every tub stood on its right bottom, would be at the head of the Seven Champions of Christendom—I say, everybody knows that the excellent St. Nicholas, in holiday times, goes about among the people in the middle of the night, distributing all sorts of toothsome and becoming gifts to the good boys and girls in this his favorite city. Some say that he comes down the chimneys in a little Jersey wagon; others, that he wears a pair of Holland skates, with which he travels like the wind; and others, who pretend to have seen him, maintain that he has lately adopted a locomotive, and was once actually detected on the *Albany* railroad. But this last assertion is looked upon to be entirely fabulous, because St. Nicholas has too much discretion to trust himself in such a newfangled jarvie; and so I leave this matter to be settled by whomsoever will take the trouble. My own opinion is, that his favorite mode of travelling is on the canal,

the motion and speed of which aptly comport with the philosophic dignity of his character.

It was in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty, or sixty-one, for the most orthodox chronicles differ in this respect; but it was a very remarkable year, and it was called *annus mirabilis* on that account. . . . What contributed to render this year still more remarkable was the building of six new three-story brick houses in the city, and the fact of three persons' setting up equipages, who, I cannot find, ever failed in business afterwards, or compounded with their creditors at a pistareen in the pound. . . .

But the most extraordinary thing of all was the confident assertion that there was but one *gray mare* within the bills of mortality, and, incredible as it may appear, she was the wife of a responsible citizen, who, it was affirmed, had grown rich by weaving velvet purses out of sows' ears. But this we look upon as being somewhat of the character of the predictions of almanac-makers. Certain it is, however, that Amos Shuttle possessed the treasure of a wife who was shrewdly suspected of having established within doors a system of government not laid down in Aristotle or the Abbé Sièyes, who made a constitution for every day in the year, and two for the first of April.

Amos Shuttle, though a mighty pompous little man out of doors, was the humblest of human creatures within. He belonged to that class of people who pass for great among the little, and little among the great;

and he would certainly have been master in his own house, had it not been for a woman. . . . Amos had grown rich, Heaven knows how—he did not know himself; but, what was somewhat extraordinary, he considered his wealth a signal proof of his talents and sagacity, and valued himself according to the infallible standard of pounds, shillings, and pence. But, though he lorded it without, he was, as we have just said, the most gentle of men within doors. The moment he stepped inside of his own house, his spirit cowered down, like that of a pious man entering a church; he felt as if he was in the presence of a superior being—to wit, Mrs. Amos Shuttle. . . .

Such as he was, Mr. Amos Shuttle waxed richer and richer every day, insomuch that those who envied his prosperity were wont to say "that he had certainly been born with a dozen silver spoons in his mouth, or such a great blockhead would never have got together such a heap of money." When he had become worth ten thousand pounds, he launched his shuttle magnanimously out of the window, ordered his weaver's beam to be split up for oven-wood, and Mrs. Amos turned his weaver's shop into a boudoir. Fortune followed him faster than he ran away from her. In a few years the ten thousand doubled, and in a few more trebled, quadrupled—in short, Amos could hardly count his money.

"What shall we do now, my dear?" asked Mrs. Shuttle, who never sought his opinion, that I can learn, except for the pleasure of contradicting him.

"Let us go and live in the country, and enjoy ourselves," quoth Amos.

"Go into the country? go to—" I could never satisfy myself what Mrs. Shuttle meant; but she stopped short, and concluded the sentence with a withering look of scorn, that would have cowed the spirits of nineteen weavers.

Amos named all sorts of places, enumerated all sorts of modes of life he could think of, and every pleasure that might enter into the imagination of a man without a soul. His wife despised them all; she would not hear of them.

"Well, my dear, suppose you suggest something; do now, Abby," at length said Amos, in a coaxing whisper; "will you, my oneydoney?"

"Ony fiddlestick! I wonder you repeat such vulgarisms. But if I must say what I should like, I should like to travel."

"Well, let us go and make a tour as far as Jamaica, or Hackensack, or Spiking-devil. There is excellent fishing for striped-bass there."

"Spiking-devil!" screamed Mrs. Shuttle; "a'n't you ashamed to swear so, you wicked mortal? I won't go to Jamaica, nor to Hackensack among the Dutch Hottentots, nor to Spiking-devil to catch striped-bass. I'll go to Europe!"

. . . When Mrs. Shuttle said a thing, it was settled. They went to Europe, taking their only son with them. The lady ransacked all the milliners' shops in Paris,

and the gentleman visited all the restaurants. He became such a desperate connoisseur and gourmand, that he could almost tell an *omelette au jambon* from a gammon of bacon. After consummating the polish, they came home, the lady with the newest old fashions, and the weaver with a confirmed preference of *potage à la Turque* over pepperpot. It is said the city trembled, as with an earthquake, when they landed; but the notion was probably superstitious.

They arrived near the close of the year, the memorable year, the *annus mirabilis*, one thousand seven hundred and sixty. Everybody that had ever known the Shuttles flocked to see them, or rather to see what they had brought with them; and such was the magic of a voyage to Europe, that Mr. and Mrs. Shuttle, who had been nobodies when they departed, became somebodies when they returned, and mounted at once to the summit of *ton*.

"You have come in good time to enjoy the festivities of the holidays," said Mrs. Hubblebubble, an old friend of Amos the weaver and his wife.

"We shall have a merry Christmas and a happy New-year," exclaimed Mrs. Doubletrouble, another old acquaintance of old times.

"The holidays?" drawled Mrs. Shuttle; "the holidays? Christmas and New-year? Pray, what are they?"

It is astonishing to see how people lose their memories abroad, sometimes. They often forget their old friends and old customs; and, occasionally, themselves.

"Why, la! now, who'd have thought it?" cried Mrs. Doubletrouble; "why, sure you haven't forgot the oly koeks and the mince-pies, the merry meetings of friends, the sleigh-rides, the Kissing-Bridge, and the family parties?"

"Family parties!" shrieked Mrs. Shuttle, and held her salts to her nose; "family parties! I never heard of anything so Gothic in Paris or Rome; and oly koeks—oh shocking! and mince-pies—detestable! and throwing open one's doors to all one's old friends, whom one wishes to forget as soon as possible—Oh! the idea is insupportable!" And again she held the salts to her nose.

Mrs. Hubblebubble and Mrs. Doubletrouble found they had exposed themselves sadly and were quite ashamed. A real genteel, well-bred, enlightened lady of fashion ought to have no rule of conduct, no conscience but Paris—whatever is fashionable there is genteel—whatever is not fashionable is vulgar. At least so thought Mrs. Hubblebubble and Mrs. Doubletrouble.

"But is it possible that all these things are out of fashion, abroad?" asked the latter, beseechingly.

"They never were in," said Mrs. Amos Shuttle. "For my part, I mean to close my doors and windows on New-year's day—I'm determined."

"And so am I," said Mrs. Hubblebubble.

"And so am I," said Mrs. Doubletrouble.

And it was settled that they should make a combina-

tion among themselves and their friends to put down the ancient and good customs of the city, and abolish the sports and enjoyments of the jolly New-year.

[*St. Nicholas is much displeased by such unfeeling conduct. He resolves that they shall never have another comfortable sleep.*]

Mrs. Amos Shuttle could not sleep, because something had whispered in her apprehensive ear, that her son, her only son, whom she had engaged to the daughter of Count Grenouille in Paris, then about three years old, was actually at that moment crossing Kissing-Bridge, in company with little Susan Varian, and some others. Now Susan was the fairest little lady of all the land. . . . She was, moreover, a good little girl, and an accomplished little girl—but alas! she had not mounted to that step in the Jacob's ladder of fashion which qualifies a person for the heaven of high *ton*, and Mrs. Shuttle had not been to Europe for nothing. . . . It kept her awake all the livelong night; and the only consolation she had was scolding poor Amos, because the sleigh-bells made such a noise.

As for Mrs. Hubblebubble and Mrs. Doubletrouble, neither of the wretches got a wink of sleep during a whole week, for thinking of the beautiful French chairs and damask curtains Mrs. Shuttle had brought from Europe. They forthwith besieged their good men, leaving them no rest until they sent out orders to Paris for just such rich chairs and curtains as those of the thrice-

happy Mrs. Shuttle, from whom they kept the affair a profound secret, each meaning to treat her to an agreeable surprise. In the mean while they could not rest, for fear the vessel which was to bring these treasures might be lost on her passage. Such was the dreadful judgment inflicted on them by the good St. Nicholas.

The perplexities of Mrs. Shuttle increased daily. In the first place, do all she could, she could not make Amos a fine gentleman. . . . He would be telling the price of everything in his house, his furniture, his wines and his dinners, insomuch that those who envied his prosperity, or, perhaps, only despised his pretensions, were wont to say, after eating his venison and drinking his old Madeira, "that he ought to have been a tavern-keeper, he knew so well how to make out a bill." Mrs. Shuttle once overheard a speech of this kind, and the good St. Nicholas himself, who had brought it about, almost felt sorry for the mortification she endured on the occasion.

Scarcely had she got over this, when she was invited to a ball by Mrs. Hubblebubble, and the first thing she saw on entering the drawing-room was a suit of damask curtains and chairs, as much like her own as two peas, only the curtains had far handsomer fringe. Mrs. Shuttle came very near fainting away, but escaped for that time, determining to mortify this impudent creature, by taking not the least notice of her finery. But St. Nicholas ordered it otherwise, so that she was

at last obliged to acknowledge they were very elegant indeed. Nay, this was not the worst, for she overheard one lady whisper to another, that Mrs. Hubblebubble's curtains were much richer than Mrs. Shuttle's.

"Oh, I dare say," replied the other—"I dare say Mrs. Shuttle bought them second-hand, for her husband is as mean as pursley."

This was too much. The unfortunate woman was taken suddenly ill—called her carriage, and went home, where it is supposed she would have died that evening, had she not wrought upon Amos to promise her an entire new suit of French furniture for her drawing-room and parlour to boot, besides a new carriage. But for all this she could not close her eyes that night, for thinking of the "second-hand curtains."

Nor was the wicked Mrs. Doubletrouble a whit better off, when her friend Mrs. Hubblebubble treated her to the agreeable surprise of the French window-curtains and chairs. "It is too bad—too bad, I declare," said she to herself: "but I'll pay her off soon." Accordingly she issued invitations for a grand ball and supper, at which both Mrs. Shuttle and Mrs. Hubblebubble were struck dumb at beholding a suit of curtains and a set of chairs exactly of the same pattern with theirs. The shock was terrible, and it is impossible to say what might have been the consequences, had not the two ladies all at once thought of uniting in abusing Mrs. Doubletrouble for her extravagance.

"I pity poor Mr. Doubletrouble," said Mrs. Shuttle, shrugging her shoulders significantly, and glancing at the room.

"And so do I," said Mrs. Hubblebubble, doing the same.

Mrs. Doubletrouble had her eye upon them, and enjoyed their mortification, until her pride was brought to the ground by a dead shot from Mrs. Shuttle, who was heard to exclaim, in reply to a lady who observed that the chairs and curtains were very handsome:

"Why, yes; but they have been out of fashion in Paris a long time; and, besides, really they are getting so common, that I intend to have mine removed to the nursery."

Heavens! what a blow! Poor Mrs. Doubletrouble hardly survived it. . . .

'Thus were these wicked and miserable women spurred on by witchcraft from one piece of prodigality to another, and a deadly rivalship grew up between them, which destroyed their own happiness and that of their husbands. . . . But they still shut their doors on the jolly anniversary of St. Nicholas, though the old respectable burghers and their wives, who had held up their heads time out of mind, continued the good custom, and laughed at the presumption of these upstart interlopers, who were followed only by a few people of silly pretensions, who had no more soul than Amos Shuttle himself.

[*Young Johnny Shuttle wishes to marry Susan Varian. His mother refuses her consent and says that his father will disinherit him.*]

"If my father goes on as he has done lately," sighed the youth, "he won't have anything left to disinherit me of but his affection, I fear. But if he had millions, I would not abandon Susan."

"Are you not ashamed of such a plebeian attachment? You, that have been to Europe! But, once for all, remember this, renounce this low-born upstart, or quit your father's home for ever."

"Upstart!" thought young Shuttle:—"one of the oldest families in the city!" He made his mother a respectful bow, bade Heaven bless her, and left the house. He was, however, met at the door by his father, who said to him,

"Johnny, I give my consent; but mind, don't tell your mother a word of the matter. I'll let her know I've a soul, as well as other people"; and he tossed his head like a war-horse.

. . . . . .

No fortune, be it ever so great, can stand the eternal sapping of wasteful extravagance, engendered and stimulated by the baleful passion of envy. In less than ten years from the hatching of the diabolical conspiracy of these three wicked women against the supremacy of the excellent St. Nicholas, their spendthrift rivalship had

ruined the fortunes of their husbands, and entailed upon themselves misery and remorse. Rich Amos Shuttle became at last as poor as a church-mouse, and would have been obliged to take to the loom again in his old age, had not Johnny, now rich, and a worshipful magistrate of the city, afforded him and his better half a generous shelter under his own happy roof. Mrs. Hubblebubble and Mrs. Doubletrouble had scarcely time to condole with Mrs. Shuttle, and congratulate each other, when their husbands went the way of all flesh; that is to say, failed for a few tens of thousands, and called their creditors together to hear the good news. The two wicked women lived long enough after this to repent of their offense against St. Nicholas; but they never imported any more French curtains, and at last perished miserably in an attempt to set the fashions in Pennypot Alley. . . .

Such was the terrible revenge of St. Nicholas, which ought to be a warning to all who attempt to set themselves up against the venerable customs of their ancestors, and backslide from the hallowed institutions of the blessed Saint, to whose good offices, without doubt, it is owing, that this his favorite city has transcended all others of the universe in beautiful damsels, valorous young men, mince-pies, and New-year cookies. . . .

AUGUSTUS BALDWIN LONGSTREET

(1790–1870)

Augustus Baldwin Longstreet was scarce buried before a legend had been started that he was born with a full set of teeth. His life had been so prodigious it seemed impossible that it should not have begun with signs and wonders.

His father was an inventor of Dutch descent living in Georgia, whose steamboat, announced before Fulton's, made a successful trip on the Savannah a few days after the try-out on the Hudson. When his son Augustus was born in 1790 in Augusta, it had 1100 inhabitants; ten years later there were six thousand, half of them slaves; it was a rich and busy little city, with a theatre and a race course. The boy was "hard to get going" in school, being too fond of fun, but once home from Yale he settled down to the law, became a legislator, then a judge famous for wise decisions and good stories, established the *Augusta Sentinel*, and in 1830 became a Methodist minister. Meanwhile he had been publishing *Georgia Scenes*, first in his own newspaper, then in cheap form at the Sentinel Press. Poe enjoyed them immensely; their popularity is easy to understand. Rough, robust, crackling with the rude humor of the time, these descriptions of horse trades and parties, fights and practical jokes, are pioneer records set down

while the impressions are yet bright in the mind. He is said to have wished to disown them when he became a minister; at any rate, he did try to destroy all copies of the first edition. But their popularity had gone beyond his power, and their influence further even than their circulation. Later Georgia writers held him in honor.

All through the yellow-fever epidemic he was a devoted clergyman. Then he was successively elected president of Emory College, Centenary College, the University of Mississippi, South Carolina College, and Mississippi again. General James Longstreet was his nephew. He could play the flute and the piano and "remember by ear." He "lived a very great while, always with the utmost intensity, not merely at one thing, or at two, but at things innumerable."

His life and his times are set forth in *Augustus Baldwin Longstreet: A study of the development of culture in the South,"* by John Donald Wade (Macmillan, 1924).

THE TURN OUT

From *Georgia Scenes*

In the good old days of *fescues*, *abisselfas*, and *anpersants*,[1] terms which used to be familiar in this country during the Revolutionary war, and which lingered in some of our county schools for a few years afterward, I visited my friend Captain Griffin, who resided about seven miles to the eastward of Wrightsborough, then in Richmond, but now in Columbia county. I reached the captain's hospitable home on Easter, and was received by him and his good lady with a *Georgia welcome* of 1790. It was warm from the heart, and taught me in a moment that the obligations of the visit were upon their side, not mine. Such receptions were not peculiar, at that time, to the captain and his family; they were common throughout the state. Where are they now! and where the generous hospitalities which invariably followed them! I see them occasionally at the contented

[1] The *fescue* was a sharpened wire or other instrument used by the preceptor to point out the letters to the children.

Abisselfa is a contraction of the words "a by itself, a." It was usual, when either of the vowels constituted a syllable of a word, to pronounce it, and denote its independent character by the words just mentioned, thus; "a by itself, *a*-c-o-r-n corn, *acorn*," "e by itself, *e*-v-i-l, *evil*," &c.

The character which stands for the word "*and*" (&) was probably pronounced by the same accompaniment, but in terms borrowed from the Latin language, thus: "& *per se*" (by itself) &. Hence, "anpersant."

farmer's door and at his festive board, but when they shall have taken leave of these, Georgia will know them no more.

The day was consumed in the interchange of news between the captain and myself (though, I confess, it might have been better employed), and the night found us seated round a temporary fire, which the captain's sons had kindled up for the purpose of dyeing eggs. It was a common custom of those days with boys to dye and peck eggs on Easter Sunday and for a few days afterward. They were coloured according to the fancy of the dyer; some yellow, some green, some purple, and some with a variety of colours, borrowed from a piece of calico. They were not unfrequently beautified with a taste and skill which would have extorted a compliment from Hezekiah Niles, if he had seen them a year ago, in the hands of the "*young operatives*," in some of the northern manufactories. No sooner was the work of dyeing finished, than our "young operatives" sallied forth to stake the whole proceeds of their "*domestic industry*" upon a peck. Egg was struck against egg, point to point, and the egg that was broken was given up as lost to the owner of the one which came whole from the shock.

While the boys were busily employed in the manner just mentioned, the captain's youngest son, George, gave us an anecdote highly descriptive of the Yankee and Georgia character, even in their buddings, and at this early date. "What you think, pa," said he, "Zeph Pettibone went and got his Uncle Zach to turn him a wooden

egg; and he won a whole hatful o' eggs from all us boys 'fore we found it out; but, when we found it out, maybe John Brown didn't smoke him for it, and took away all his eggs, and give 'em back to us boys; and you think he didn't go then and git a guinea-egg, and win most as many more, and John Brown would o' give it to him agin if all we boys hadn't said we thought it was fair. I never see such a boy as that Zeph Pettibone in all my life. He don't mind whipping no more 'an nothing at all, if he can win eggs."

This anecdote, however, only fell in by accident, for there was an all-absorbing subject which occupied the minds of the boys during the whole evening, of which I could occasionally catch distant hints, in undertones and whispers, but of which I could make nothing, until they were afterward explained by the captain himself. Such as "I'll be bound Pete Jones and Bill Smith stretches him." "By Jockey, soon as they seize him, you'll see me down upon him like a duck upon a June-bug." "By the time he touches the ground, he'll think he's got into a hornet's nest," &c.

"The boys," said the captain, as they retired, "are going to turn out the schoolmaster to-morrow, and you can perceive they think of nothing else. We must go over to the schoolhouse and witness the contest, in order to prevent injury to preceptor or pupils; for, though the master is always, upon such occasions, glad to be turned out, and only struggles long enough to present his patrons a fair apology for giving the children a holyday,

which he desires as much as they do, the boys always conceive a holyday gained by a "turn out" as the sole achievement of their valour; and, in their zeal to distinguish themselves upon such memorable occasions, they sometimes become too rough, provoke the master to wrath, and a very serious conflict ensues. To prevent these consequences, to bear witness that the master was *forced* to yield before he would withhold a day of his promised labour from his employers, and to act as a mediator between him and the boys in settling the articles of peace, I always attend; and you must accompany me to-morrow." I cheerfully promised to do so.

The captain and I rose before the sun, but the boys had risen and were off to the schoolhouse before the dawn. After an early breakfast, hurried by Mrs. G. for our accommodation, my host and myself took up our line of march towards the schoolhouse. We reached it about half an hour before the master arrived, but not before the boys had completed its fortifications. It was a simple log-pen, about twenty feet square, with a doorway cut out of the logs, to which was fitted a rude door, made of clapboards, and swung on wooden hinges. The roof was covered with clapboards also, and retained in their places by heavy logs placed on them. The chimney was built of logs, diminishing in size from the ground to the top, and overspread inside and out with red clay mortar.

. . . . . .

As I before remarked, the boys had strongly fortified the schoolhouse, of which they had taken possession.

The door was barricaded with logs, which I should have supposed would have defied the combined powers of the whole school. The chimney, too, was nearly filled with logs of goodly size; and these were the only passways to the interior. I concluded, if a *turn out* was all that was necessary to decide the contest in favour of the boys, they had already gained the victory. They had, however, not as much confidence in their outworks as I had, and, therefore, had armed themselves with long sticks; not for the purpose of using them upon the master if the battle should come to close quarters, for this was considered unlawful warfare; but for the purpose of guarding their *works* from his approaches, which it was considered perfectly lawful to protect by all manner of jobs and punches through the cracks. From the early assembling of the girls, it was very obvious that they had been let into the conspiracy, though they took no part in the active operations. They would, however, occasionally drop a word of encouragement to the boys, such as "I wouldn't turn out the master but if I did turn him out, I'd die before I'd give up." These remarks doubtless had an emboldening effect upon "*the young freeborns*," as Mrs. Trollope would call them; for I never knew the Georgian of any age who was indifferent to the smiles and praises of the ladies—before his marriage.

At length Mr. Michael St. John, the schoolmaster, made his appearance. Though some of the girls had met him a quarter of a mile from the schoolhouse, and told

him all that had happened, he gave signs of sudden astonishment and indignation when he advanced to the door, and was assailed by a whole platoon of sticks from the cracks: "Why, what does all this mean?" said he, as he approached the captain and myself, with a countenance of two or three varying expressions.

"Why," said the captain, "the boys have turned you out, because you have refused to give them an Easter holyday."

"Oh," returned Michael, "that's it, is it? Well, I'll see whether their parents are to pay me for letting their children play when they please." So saying, he advanced to the schoolhouse, and demanded, in a lofty tone, of its inmates, an unconditional surrender.

"Well, give us holyday then," said twenty little urchins within, "and we'll let you in."

"Open the door of the *Academy*"—(Michael would allow nobody to call it a schoolhouse)—"Open the door of the academy this instant," said Michael, "or I'll break it down."

"Break it down," said Pete Jones and Bill Smith, "and we'll break you down."

During this colloquy I took a peep into the fortress, to see how the garrison were affected by the parley. The little ones were obviously panic-struck at the first words of command; but their fears were all chased away by the bold, determined reply of Pete Jones and Bill Smith, and they raised a whoop of defiance.

Michael now walked round the academy three times,

examining all its weak points with great care. He then paused, reflected for a moment, and wheeled off suddenly towards the woods, as though a bright thought had just struck him. He passed twenty things which I supposed he might be in quest of, such as huge stones, fence-rails, portable logs, and the like, without bestowing the least attention upon them. He went to one old log, searched it thoroughly, then to another, then to a hollow stump, peeped into it with great care, then to a hollow log, into which he looked with equal caution, and so on.

"What is he after?" inquired I.

"I'm sure I don't know," said the captain, "but the boys do. Don't you notice the breathless silence which prevails in the schoolhouse, and the intense anxiety with which they are eying him through the cracks?"

At this moment Michael had reached a little excavation at the root of a dogwood, and was in the act of putting his hand into it, when a voice from the garrison exclaimed, with most touching pathos, "Lo'd o' messy, he's found my eggs! boys, let's give up."

"I won't give up," was the reply from many voices at once.

"Rot your cowardly skin, Zeph Pettibone, you wouldn't give a wooden egg for all the holydays in the world."

If these replies did not reconcile Zephaniah to his apprehended loss, it at least silenced his complaints. In the mean time Michael was employed in relieving

Zeph's storehouse of its provisions; and, truly, its contents told well for Zeph's skill in egg-pecking. However, Michael took out the eggs with great care, and brought them within a few paces of the schoolhouse, and laid them down with equal care in full view of the besieged. He revisited the places which he had searched, and to which he seemed to have been led by intuition; for from nearly all of them did he draw eggs, in greater or less numbers. These he treated as he had done Zeph's, keeping each pile separate. Having arranged the eggs in double files before the door, he marched between them with an air of triumph, and once more demanded a surrender, under pain of an entire destruction of the garrison's provisions.

"Break 'em just as quick as you please," said George Griffin; "our mothers'll give us a plenty more, won't they, pa?"

"I can answer for yours, my son," said the captain; "she would rather give up every egg upon the farm, than see you play the coward or traitor to save your property."

Michael, finding that he could make no impression upon the fears or the avarice of the boys, determined to carry their fortifications by storm. Accordingly, he procured a heavy fence-rail, and commenced the assault upon the door. It soon came to pieces, and the upper logs fell out, leaving a space of about three feet at the top. Michael boldly entered the breach, when, by the articles of war, sticks were thrown aside as no

longer lawful weapons. He was resolutely met on the half-demolished rampart by Peter Jones and William Smith, supported by James Griffin. These were the three largest boys in the school; the first about sixteen years of age, the second about fifteen, and the third just eleven. Twice was Michael repulsed by these young champions; but the third effort carried him fairly into the fortress. Hostilities now ceased for a while, and the captain and I, having levelled the remaining logs at the door, followed Michael into the house. A large three inch plank (if it deserve that name, for it was wrought from the half of a tree's trunk entirely with the axe), attached to the logs by means of wooden pins, served the whole school for a writing desk. At a convenient distance below it, and on a line with it, stretched a smooth log, resting upon the logs of the house, which answered for the writers' seat. Michael took his seat upon the desk, placed his feet on the seat, and was sitting very composedly, when, with a simultaneous movement, Pete and Bill seized each a leg, and marched off with it in quick time. The consequence is obvious; Michael's head first took the desk, then the seat, and finally the ground (for the house was not floored), with three sonorous thumps of most doleful portent. No sooner did he touch the ground than he was completely buried with boys. The three elder laid themselves across his head, neck, and breast, the rest arranging themselves *ad libitum*. Michael's equanimity was considerably disturbed by the first thump, became restive with the second, and

took flight with the third. His first effort was to disengage his legs, for without them he could not rise, and to lie in his present position was extremely inconvenient and undignified. Accordingly, he drew up his right, and kicked at random. This movement laid out about six in various directions upon the floor. Two rose crying: "Ding his old red-headed skin," said one of them, "to go and kick me right in my sore belly, where I fell down and raked it, running after that fellow that cried 'school-butter.' " [1]

"Drot his old snaggle-tooth picture," said the other, "to go and hurt my sore toe, where I knocked the nail off going to the spring to fetch a gourd of *warter* for him, and not for myself n'other."

"Hut!" said Captain Griffin, "young Washingtons mind these trifles! At him again."

The name of Washington cured their wounds and dried up their tears in an instant, and they legged him *de novo*. The left leg treated six more as unceremoniously as the right had those just mentioned; but the talismanic name had just fallen upon their ears before

[1] I have never been able to satisfy myself clearly as to the literal meaning of these terms. They were considered an unpardonable insult to a country school, and always justified an attack by the whole fraternity upon the person who used them in their hearing. I have known the scholars pursue a traveller two miles to be revenged of the insult. Probably they are a corruption of "The school's better." "*Better*" was the term commonly used of old to denote a *superior*, as it sometimes is in our day: "Wait till your betters are served," for example. I conjecture, therefore, the expression just alluded to was one of challenge, contempt, and defiance, by which the person who used it avowed himself the *superior* in all respects of the whole school. If anyone can give a better account of it, I shall be pleased to receive it.

the kick, so they were invulnerable. They therefore returned to the attack without loss of time. The struggle seemed to wax hotter and hotter for a short time after Michael came to the ground, and he threw the children about in all directions and postures, giving some of them thumps which would have placed the *ruffle-shirted* little darlings of the present day under the discipline of paregoric and opodeldoc for a week; but these hardy sons of the forest seemed not to feel them. As Michael's head grew easy, his limbs, by a natural sympathy, became more quiet, and he offered one day's holyday as the price. The boys demanded a week; but here the captain interposed, and, after the common but often unjust custom of arbitrators, split the difference. In this instance the terms were equitable enough, and were immediately acceded to by both parties. Michael rose in a good humour, and the boys were, of course. Loud was their talking of their deeds of valour as they retired. One little fellow about seven years old, and about three feet and a half high, jumped up, cracked his feet together, and exclaimed, "By jingo, Pete Jones, Bill Smith, and *me* can hold any *Sinjin* that ever trod Georgy grit." By-the-way, the name of *St. John* was always pronounced "*Sinjin*" by the common people of that day; and so it must have been by Lord Bolingbroke himself, else his friend Pope would never have addressed him in a line so unmusical as

"Awake, my St. John, leave all meaner things."

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

(1848–1908)

"As a poor boy, deserted by his father and living in poverty with his hard-working mother," says Julia Collier Harris in her biography of her father-in-law, "he had every opportunity to shiver under the chill of snobbism, if such an atmosphere had prevailed in his native village." But this little town in Middle Georgia offered no such cold. He drew its genial air into his lungs, and "grew and thrived with the traditional persistence of a red-headed boy."

His desire to write grew out of hearing his mother read *The Vicar of Wakefield,* but none of the little tales he produced in imitation have been preserved, and it was not until he "left home to stick his head into an ink fountain" that he began to write. It was at "Turnwold," where at fourteen he went to learn the printer's trade from the editor of *The Countryman,* that he found the inspiration of his most famous work. For this was a plantation of the traditional sort; here he absorbed, without thought of literary values, the stories, songs and myths of the old Negroes. Later on, when he was a working journalist, a Northern magazine published an article on folklore, with rough outlines of some of these stories. This was his cue: "All I did," he explained, "was to write

out and put into print the stories I had heard all my life," as if they were told to a little boy by a Negro of the old régime. "He was not an invention of my own," said Harris, "but a human syndicate, I might say, of three or four old darkies whom I had known. I just walloped them together into one person and called him Uncle Remus."

Upon the mysterious "Mis' Meadows en' de gals," whose presence among the animals is so well taken for granted that it is never explained, his correspondence with the artist first chosen to illustrate the stories may throw some light. "Perhaps they mean just *Nature*," wrote F. S. Church, "in which case I should depict them as pretty girls in simple costumes," to which Harris replied, "*Why* she is there, I cannot say," adding, "by all means let Mis' Meadows figure as Nature."

The story chosen for this collection, in which the Rabbit proves to Mis' Meadows and the girls that the Fox is his riding-horse, is almost identical with one found by H. H. Smith among the Indians of the Amazon, in which the deer tells the cotia (a kind of rat) "if you can make the juguar carry you, you shall have my daughter." Smith sent proofs of this chapter of his book to Harris, but said he was not prepared to form a theory.

The original of a character in a novel by another Middle Georgian was once hailed with, "Well, Squire, little Jonce has gone an' novelled you!", and replied, "Gone an' novelled me? What could 'a possessed him?" Surely a fortunate spirit possessed Joel Chandler Harris to "novel" the legends of his plantation days, in a classic in which not virtue but helplessness triumphs, and in which mischievousness takes the place of malice.

MR. RABBIT GROSSLY DECEIVES MR. FOX

From *Uncle Remus, His Songs and Sayings*

One evening when the little boy, whose nights with Uncle Remus were as entertaining as those Arabian ones of blessed memory, had finished supper and hurried out to sit with his venerable patron, he found the old man in great glee. Indeed, Uncle Remus was talking and laughing to himself at such a rate that the little boy was afraid he had company. The truth is, Uncle Remus had heard the child coming, and, when the rosy-cheeked chap put his head in at the door, was engaged in a monologue, the burden of which seemed to be—

"Ole Molly Har',
W'at you doin' dar,
Settin' in de cornder
Smokin' yo seegyar?"

As a matter of course this vague allusion reminded the little boy of the fact that the wicked Fox was still in pursuit of the Rabbit, and he immediately put his curiosity in the shape of a question.

"Uncle Remus, did the Rabbit have to go clean away when he got loose from the Tar-Baby?"

"Bless grashus, honey, dat he didn't. Who? Him? You dunno nothin' 'tall 'bout Brer Rabbit ef dat's de

way you puttin' 'im down. W'at he gwine 'way fer? He moughter stayed sorter close twel de pitch rub off'n his ha'r, but t'weren't menny days 'fo' he wuz lopin' up en down de neighborhood same ez ever, en I dunno ef he weren't mo' sassier dan befo'.

"Seem like dat de tale 'bout how he got mixt up wid de Tar-Baby got 'round 'mongst de nabers. Leas' ways, Miss Meadows en de gals got win' un it, en de next time Brer Rabbit paid um a visit Miss Meadows tackled 'im 'bout it, en de gals sot up a monstus gigglement. Brer Rabbit, he sot up des ez cool ez a cowcumber, he did, en let 'em run on."

"Who was Miss Meadows, Uncle Remus?" inquired the little boy.

"Don't ax me, honey. She wuz in de tale, Miss Meadows en de gals wuz, en de tale I give you like hi't wer gun ter me. Brer Rabbit, he sot dar, he did, sorter lam' like, en den bimeby he cross his legs, he did, and wink his eye slow, en up and say, sezee:

" 'Ladies, Brer Fox wuz my daddy's ridin'-hoss fer thirty year; maybe mo', but thirty year dat I knows un,' sezee; en den he paid um his 'specks, en tip his beaver, en march off, he did, des ez stiff en ez stuck up ez a fire-stick.

"Nex' day, Brer Fox cum a callin', and w'en he gun fer ter laugh 'bout Brer Rabbit, Miss Meadows en de gals, dey ups en tells 'im 'bout w'at Brer Rabbit say. Den Brer Fox grit his tushes sho'nuff, he did, en he

look mighty dumpy, but w'en he riz fer ter go he up en say, sezee:

" 'Ladies, I ain't 'sputin' w'at you say, but I'll make Brer Rabbit chaw up his words en spit um out right whar you kin see 'im,' sezee, en wid dat off Brer Fox put.

"En w'en he got in de big road, he shuck de dew off'n his tail, en made a straight shoot fer Brer Rabbit's house. W'en he got dar, Brer Rabbit wuz 'spectin' un 'im, en de do' wuz shet fas'. Brer Fox knock. Nobody ain't ans'er. Brer Fox knock. Nobody ans'er. Den he knock agin—blam! blam! Den Brer Rabbit holler out mighty weak:

" 'Is dat you, Brer Fox? I want you ter run en fetch de doctor. Dat bait er pusly w'at I e't dis mawnin' is gittin' 'way wid me. Do, please, Brer Fox, run quick,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

" 'I come atter you, Brer Rabbit,' sez Brer Fox, sezee. 'Dar's gwineter be a party up at Miss Meadows's, sezee. 'All de gals 'll be dere, en I promus' dat I'd fetch you. De gals, dey 'lowed dat hit wouldn't be no party 'ceppin' I fotch you,' sez Brer Fox, sezee.

"Den Brer Rabbit say he wuz too sick, en Brer Fox say he wuzzent, en dar dey had it up an down, 'sputin' en contendin'. Brer Rabbit say he can't walk. Brer Fox say he tote him. Brer Rabbit say how? Brer Fox say in his arms. Brer Rabbit say he drap 'im. Brer Fox 'low he won't. Bimeby Brer Rabbit say he go ef Brer Fox tote

'im on his back. Brer Fox say he would. Brer Rabbit say he can't ride widout a saddle. Brer Fox say he git de saddle. Brer Rabbit say he can't set in saddle less he have bridle fer ter hol' by. Brer Fox say he git de bridle. Brer Rabbit say he can't ride widout bline bridle, kase Brer Fox he shyin' at stumps 'long de road, en fling 'im off. Brer Fox say he git bline bridle. Den Brer Rabbit say he go. Den Brer Fox say he ride Brer Rabbit mos' up ter Miss Meadows, en den he could git down en walk de balance er de way. Brer Rabbit 'greed, en den Brer Fox lipt out atter de saddle en de bridle.

"Co'se Brer Rabbit know de game Brer Fox fixin' fer ter play, en he 'termin' fer ter outdo 'im, en by de time he koam his ha'ar en twis' his mustarsh, en sorter rig up, yer come Brer Fox, saddle en bridle on, en lookin' ez peart ez a circus pony. He trot up ter de do' en stan' dar pawin' de ground en chompin' de bit same like sho' nuff hoss, en Brer Rabbit he mount, he did, en dey amble off. Brer Fox can't see behime wid de bline bridle on, but bimeby he feel Brer Rabbit raise one er his foots.

"'W'at you doin' now, Brer Rabbit,' sezee.

"'Short'nin' de lef' stir'p, Brer Fox,' sezee.

Bimeby Brer Rabbit raise up de udder foot.

"'W'at you doin' now, Brer Rabbit," sezee.

"'Pullin' down my pants, Brer Fox,' sezee.

"All de time, bless grashus, honey, Brer Rabbit wer puttin' on his spurrers, en w'en dey got close to Miss Meadows's, whar Brer Rabbit wuz to git off, en Brer Fox made a motion fer ter stan' still, Brer Rabbit slap

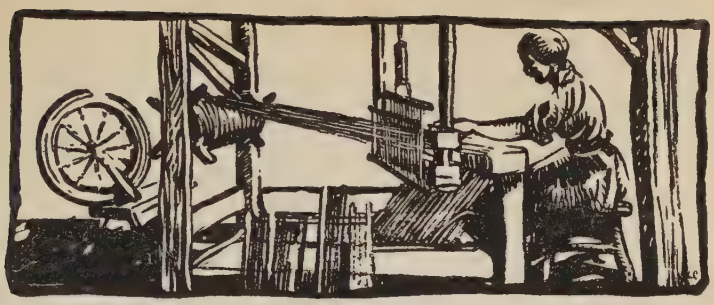
de spurrers inter Brer Fox's flanks, en you better b'leeve he got over groun'. W'en dey got ter de house, Miss Meadows en all de gals wuz settin' on de peazzer, en stidder stoppin' at de gate, Brer Rabbit rid on by, he did, en den come gallopin' down de road en up ter de hoss-rack, w'ich he hitch Brer Fox at, en den he santer iner de house, he did, en shake han's wid de gals, en set dar, smokin' his seegyar same ez a town man. Bimeby he draw in a long puff, en den let hit out in a cloud, en squar hisse'f back en holler out, he did:

"'Ladies, ain't I done tell you Brer Fox wuz de ridin'-hoss fer our fambly? He sorter losin' his gait now, but I spect I kin fetch 'im all right in a mont' er so,' sezee.

"En den Brer Rabbit sorter grin, he did, en de gals giggle, en Miss Meadows, she praise up de pony, en dar wuz Brer Fox hitch fas' ter de rack, en couldn't he'p hisse'f."

"Is that all, Uncle Remus?" asked the little boy as the old man paused.

"Dat ain't all, honey, but 'twon't do fer ter give out too much cloff fer ter cut one pa'r pants," replied the old man sententiously.



LUCY FURMAN

Cornwallis offered a thousand pounds for the head of Dr. Richard Furman, the South Carolina preacher from whom Lucy Furman is descended; his prayers had so heartened the American camp, whither he had fled, that they were more feared by the British general than the armies of Sumter and Marion.

Lucy Furman's first memories are of the Ohio River, with the deep-toned whistles of the steamboats plying between Louisville and New Orleans. Her parents died young, and at nineteen she became a court stenographer in Southern Indiana, writing after business hours the humorous sketches later published as *Stories of a Sanctified Town.* The double strain was too much for her delicate health; she returned to Covington and, finding upon a visit to the pioneer mountain settlement at Hindman, Knott County, Kentucky, that the outdoor work was beneficial, remained there for years. Little boys were her especial charge, wild, homesick little boys who believed that "a man hain't a man till he's kilt off a few," and scenes from her experiences with them began to appear in the *Century Magazine,* then were gathered into a book as *Mothering on Perilous.* These young fighters of twenty years ago are still her friends; several went out to various colleges—one to Harvard—working their way; others followed the first dozen

at the school, year after year, and, in spite of continued frail health and increasingly hard work out of doors, her life there was rich and full.

In May, 1922, when the Hindman School was twenty years old, the first of the *Quare Women* stories was published in the *Atlantic Monthly;* before that, publicity would have wounded the pride of those with whom and for whom she was living and working. In 1925 came *The Glass Window,* from which this story is taken (omitting only a few sentences in which characters appear who are not concerned in this action). The year before, she had been forced at last to leave the mountains and settle in the milder climate of Florida. Her life, in the true sense of the word, has been spent in the little world—until lately a world of yesterday—to which her work was given, and from whose conditions her books have sprung.

CHRISTMAS ON BEE TREE

From *The Glass Window*

DECEMBER came in with almost a week of bad rainy weather, which compelled Uncle Lot to stay close in the house.

When, having finished his feeding and wood-chopping for the day, he took his seat by the fire, Bible in hand, Aunt Ailsie stopped long enough in her spinning to hand him his spectacles, which she had been wearing, and then made apparently patient efforts to resume it without the glasses. But the yarn began snapping and flying.

" 'Pears like hit hain't much use," she sighed; "a body can't do right spinning without they can foller the yarn, and my pore old eyes seems like has done their do. I allow I might as well take this here wool up Bee Tree for Cyarline to spin, or somebody else that's got either daylight or good seeing. And maybe to weave, too, for my weaving now wouldn't noways be the pretty weaving hit was, and them women allowed they wanted the best. I hate to give hit up, though, having sot my mind on yearning all that money myself. If there was jest some way for me to get good light to see by, my eyes might hold out to make many a kiver yet."

"You hain't got all the light you might have," said

Uncle Lot. "Lemme fix hit brighter." He poked the fire vigorously with the long, homemade poker, threw several chunks in front of the backlog, and, selecting a longer and fatter pine stick from the basket, stuck it into the jamb.

"Now try if you hain't got sufficience of light," he commanded.

She started in again at the spinning; but the yarn continued to snap and fly viciously, and at last she sighed; " 'Pears like hit hain't no great of help—fire-light and fat-pine both being so flickery. Stiddy light is what is called for when eyes goes to dimming. Don't you mind, paw; I'll go back to the cyarpet rags. I never did set store by wealth, nohow—a body can't sarve both God and Mammon."

She picked up her wheel and set it back in its corner, and taking up the basket of wool, started toward the loft steps.

"How much was it them women agreed to give you?"

"Ten dollars a kiver, and after I oncet had the yarn spun and dyed I could easy weave two kivers a week."

"And how much more spinning you got to do?"

"I could finish maybe in two weeks if I had sight and light."

Uncle Lot, to whose elect soul ten dollars loomed as large as to that of any foredoomed sinner, slowly removed his square silver spectacles and held them toward her.

"Here's my specs," he said. "I allow I can make out to scrouge along without 'em whilst you do the spinning."

She shook her head vehemently. "No, paw, I wouldn't see ary grain of peace if I was to part you from Job and tother ole fellers you set sech store by; hit would be wicked and godless in me; any money I yearnt that way wouldn't never do me no good."

She climbed the lower treads of the ladder-like steps.

Uncle Lot rose this time and came toward her rather hastily, the spectacles outstretched in his hand. "Take 'em," he said, "hit's my will. I got corn to shell, and more odd jobs."

"Well, paw," reluctantly, "the man being the head of the woman, hit's my bounden duty to obey you; but ricollect, hit's again' my jedgment."

Meekly she put on the spectacles, drew out the wheel again, and set it whirring.

Uncle Lot went out in the rain to the barn, shucked his corn and shelled it, and returned to the house with the question, "Hain't it nigh about time to put dinner on?"

"Gee-oh, paw, hit's two good hours yet!"

He sat down by the fire and watched the small hand of the clock, which apparently consumed an age in passing from minute mark to minute mark. After eons of time had passed in this way, he rose desperately, and went out again to the barn. But not a thing could he see there to do. Tom mule and Darb, Old Pied and

Blossom, all regarded him with surprise, as if he were an alien and an intruder.

Returning to the house, he sat and fidgeted painfully for another endless period of time, with Job, Solomon, and Jeremiah in full sight on the fireboard, but as unattainable as if in another world.

When Aunt Ailsie at last arose to put dinner on, he plunged instantly into the delights of Lamentations; and while she washed the dishes after dinner he snatched a greedy bit of Job. Then the long afternoon, the sea without a sail, stretched before him. It was too wet for him to ride into the village; the clock ticked more slowly than ever. After nearly three hours of agony, he went up the branch to Link's, only a half mile distant.

"Pore creetur," said Aunt Ailsie, after he was gone, "he's pyorely punishing. I feel for him, too, but hit's his own will; he would make me wear these here specs! Well, I'm proud he's gone to Link's; he'll see how good that-air glass window of Rutheny's lets in the light."

Day after day of rain followed. For almost a week Uncle Lot was a prisoner, without a prisoner's solace. Every morning Aunt Ailsie insisted on giving him the specs; every morning he stubbornly refused to take them. His sufferings were evidently intense, as frequent sighs and groans testified. He began to look so peaked and forlorn that Aunt Ailsie now and then took pity on his desperate condition and threw a sop to Cerberus.

"That air reel of mine," she would say, when things appeared to have reached a breaking-point, "has wanted a new piece for allus. Do you feel to make one for hit, paw? I got to use it soon as I'm through this spinning." Or: "I hain't got nigh enough quills to spool all this yarn on; would hit be axing too much of you to make me some new ones?" or again: "This here old sley is all snaggle-toothed—how about putting some new reeds in hit, paw? The weaving hain't fur off now." These soporific labors and the snatches of reading he got at noon and night took some of the edge off his desperation.

"I'd have you know," he said, on handing over the specs the last afternoon of the rain, "that these-here specs is a burnt offering on the brazen altar of sacrifice."

"I know hit, paw; hit's terrible hard on you, and I feel for you, I do, setting there the livelong day denying yourself this way. Hit's too hard; you oughtn't to treat yourself that way."

"Hit's hard, too," he agreed crossly; "but dollars don't grow up in the sticks; and that-air spinning can't last everly."

"No indeed, paw. And one marciful thing—you got such a lavish of Scripter shet up in your mind, you can allus call hit up and meditate on hit even if you can't read. I'm proud I got me a man with so much larning. I never seed nobody, not even a preacher, knowed Scripter like you."

"Hit's a fact," admitted Uncle Lot, modestly; "but

sometimes, even if a body knows a thing, they hain't able to call hit up."

"Not when they get older," sighed Aunt Ailsie. "Law, law, old age is a-creeping up fast on me and you both. God send your mind hain't a-getting failable like my eyes!"

"I may not be as young as I oncet was," he replied, tartly, "but I'll have you know my headpiece is able as ever!"

A week of fair weather followed, during which Uncle Lot was hard at work in the timber, and Aunt Ailsie made good progress with the spinning. At last the yarn was all spun and spooled and she rode in to the Forks on a Saturday to buy the indigo and madder for the dying. While she was trading for these in Madison Lee's store, a wagon, followed by a noisy train of children, passed along the street.

"What air the young uns follering Adam's wagon that way for?" she asked Madison.

"He's fetching in the women's Christmas things—candy and such. They aim to have a Christmas tree at the school."

Quickly as she could get there, Aunt Ailsie was at the women's cottage. Almost every child in town was already hanging over the palings, while Uncle Adam unloaded the wagon, handing out bucket after bucket labeled CANDY, and various mysterious boxes.

"What is a Christmas tree, women?" she asked Amy

and Virginia, after they had all come into the house again. "I heared talk of hit downtown."

They told her it was a tree hung with pretties and presents for the children at Christmas time.

"Never heared tell of one in life, or present for Christmas either, till you women sont in that-air box last year, with things for the young uns, and the fine lace collar and necktie for me and Lot. When do you aim to have your tree—New Christmas or Old Christmas?"

It was the women's turn to look puzzled.

"New Christmas," explained Aunt Ailsie, "comes first, along in December, and is the time when young folks frolics, and everybody drinks and cheers themselves. Old Christmas comes the sixth of January, and is *rael* Christmas, and a solemn season; and payrents don't put up with no antic ways from the young then."

"We never heard of any but New Christmas," replied the women.

"That hain't right Christmas, and never was; and the way I know it, the night afore Old Christmas, at midnight, all the cattle gets down on their knees and lows and prays, and the elders puts out a head of blossom. Creeters they know better than humans when Jesus was bornded; and I have heared 'em at their lowing and praying, and have scratched the snow off'n the elders and seed the green shoots next morning. All the old folks will tell you the same."

The women then remembered their English history —how, when the calendar was changed eleven days in the middle of the eighteenth century, the country people of England, and many of the colonists also, refused to accept the new, earlier date for Christmas, but kept their festival on the sixth of January.

Aunt Ailsie was invited to come in on New Christmas Eve and help trim the tree, as well as to be present Christmas morning.

"Women," she replied, "I'll be here if there's any getting here, though I see trouble ahead, my man being again' everything gay and lively."

As she started out the gate, she met Susanna and Christine coming in.

"Hain't it grand about the Christmas tree?" she asked. " 'Pears like I can't hardly wait to see one. I'll come holp you gals trim it if I have good luck."

"Maybe you'll come and help me with the one up Bee Tree for Lowizy and her scholars, just after the one here," said Christine.

"I'll come, too," declared Aunt Ailsie, joyfully.

. . . . . .

The fine weather continuing the third week in December, Aunt Ailsie busily made her dye-pots— indigo, madder, walnut. Then, having run her yarn on the reel into hanks, she dyed and dipped with zest, rejoicing with an artist's delight in the rich colors that resulted. Very beautiful the hanks looked after the dye-

ing, their deep blues, soft reds and rich browns hanging from the joists of "old house" in every place not already occupied by strings of shucky beans, cushaw, red peppers, and onions. Gazing with pride upon her handiwork, Aunt Ailsie softly repeated to herself those verses from the last chapter of Proverbs, better known to her, perhaps, than any in the Bible, from ceaseless repetition by Uncle Lot. "She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. . . . She layeth her hands to the spindle and her hands hold the distaff. . . . She maketh fine linen . . . she maketh . . . coverings of tapestry . . . feareth not the snow for her household . . . eateth not the bread of idleness—"

"Hit's the pine-blank picter of me," she said to herself. Then another verse smote somewhat sharply upon her conscience. "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her . . . she will do him good and not evil all the days of her life," and remembering guiltily the plan at that moment enlarging in her mind, she lapsed into an instant of pensiveness. "Well, hain't I trying to do him good? Hain't it as much for his good as mine to have a glass window? Won't hit save his sight as much as mine, and likewise his rheumatiz, from going out in the cold to hunt fat pine?" With which sophistries she quieted the still, small voice.

And now came the most tedious part of her labors, the warping of the big loom. First the thread or chain must be wound on the warping-bars and made into the desired lengths; then it must be beamed—that is, each

separate thread of the hundreds composing the bundle must be drawn with a wire hook through the reeds of the sley and tied to the main beam of the loom. No human being can accomplish this alone, and Rutheny was called in for a couple of days, the spectacles also being required every minute. Fortunately Uncle Lot was out snaking logs down the slopes.

When she asked him one night about going in to see the women's Christmas tree, he promised that if she would get through everything else and be ready to settle down to weaving by that time, he might take her in. "For I aim to have the last of my logs down by then, and to sarch the Scripters stiddy all winter from then on," he said; "and I want you to get to a job where you won't need my specs no more, which a body knows weaving don't take no eyesight at all, hardly; and atter you once get started on hit, I'll have peace and satisfaction."

He firmly held out against her going in to help trim the tree, however. "Hit hain't nothing but a frolic and a vanity noway—I don't hold with no sech," he said.

So the Christmas tree, a beautiful "spruce-pine," hemlock, had to be trimmed in the school chapel without her aid.

. . . . . .

Hours before dawn on Christmas morning Aunt Ailsie was up and had Uncle Lot up, and by five-thirty they were ready to start for the tree, which was not to

be until eight. Both were dressed in their best, Uncle Lot in a fine linen shirt of her weaving, and a suit of black sheep's-wool likewise spun, woven, and tailored by her. She wore her newest linsey, black with blue stripes, and a new print apron with blue sprigs, and her black-silk sunbonnet and home-spun shawl lay on the bed. The two sat stiffly in "old-house" until time to start. Then, when Uncle Lot went to saddle the nags, she hurried to the chest of drawers in "tother-house," took out the small box containing the women's gifts of a year before, and laying the lace collar about her neck, ran to the small, wavery mirror on the back porch and took a breathless look at herself. How lovely it was! How she longed to wear it! But hearing Uncle Lot's step on the front porch, she quickly tore it off, and stuffed it back, with the black tie, into the box and drawer just as he entered the door.

After bonnet, shawl and mitts were all on, she remembered that she had not gathered the eggs, which would be frozen if left. She was snooping around in the barn loft, amid bundles of fodder and piles of hay, when through a wide crack between the logs she saw Uncle Lot emerge from "tother house" on to the back porch, look about in a strange, furtive way, and approach the mirror, where he fumbled with something at his neck. Not until he stood back to observe the effect did she see that it was the "vanity" he had so sternly condemned a year before—the black necktie! Only for an instant, however, did he dally with temptation; in

the next he had snatched off the tie and hurried back into the house. When she arrived, his shirt-front was as innocent of a tie as it had always been.

As the two rode up Troublesome through the ice and snow a little later, Uncle Lot, severe and grizzled, in the lead, Aunt Ailsie a picture of wifely meekness, following, one would never have guessed that her bosom was a seething caldron of emotions—joy at the discovery of her lord's weakness, hope that the breach once made would widen, prevision that in the end she would certainly enjoy not only the lace collar and lesser pretties but the glass window too. She saw it plainly, set in the south wall; and the vision nerved her to continued persistence in her plan.

. . . . . .

. . . The Rideout house was bursting and running over with life. Not only the forty-odd "scholars" were there, but all their younger brothers and sisters, their fathers, mothers, and in some cases their grandmothers. Christine thanked her stars she had brought a hundred candy-stockings.

Everybody had run out of the kitchen, a number of barefoot boys overflowing into the snow of the yard with no apparent discomfort, and Giles then set up the tree David had already cut, and Christine and Phebe trimmed it and tied on dolls and toys. Aunt Ailsie and Uncle Lot arrived just as they were lighting the candles. The door into the other room was thrown

open, and the crowd surged in, Lowizy, wrapped in blankets, in her father's arms.

There was silence for a moment as everybody gazed spellbound. Not a child spoke. They scarcely breathed, their eyes glued to the tree.

A few "gee-oh's!" and "eh, laws!" rose softly from the older people, however, and one old lady exclaimed in a rapt voice, "Glory to God, was sech a wonderly sight ever seed afore! Them pretty leetle creeters a-flying in them limbs—air they angels from heaven?"

Aunt Ailsie laid a hand on the speaker's arm. "Them's store poppets, Cyarline," she corrected, in a stage whisper.

Giles, in his impressive way, read the story of the first Christmas from St. Luke, and told why gifts are made to children on this day. Then Christine sang "O Little Town of Bethlehem." Then the gifts were detached from the tree and handed to Lowizy, who read the names and passed them on.

Christine had never in her life seen such decorum. Not a child grabbed or snatched or begged for anything, each taking what came its way in "gladness and singleness of heart." When a "store-poppet" was passed to a grand-daughter of Aunt Cyarline, the old lady promptly seized it from the child's arms, to clasp it to her own hard bosom.

"I jest got a bound to hold it, Cindy," she cried; "seems like I never pined for nothing so bad in all my days! Now hain't hit a picter, people? Look-a-there at

them-air blue eyes and rosy jaws and yaller curls! Hit's too pretty to live!"

Aunt Ailsie thereupon possessed herself of little Dovey's doll and, backing into a corner, the two old souls compared eyes, hair, clothes, and size as if they were little girls again, or young mothers with their first babies.

"Yourn's the biggest, but mine's the most prettiest," was Aunt Cyarline's conclusion, which Aunt Ailsie indignantly repudiated.

Their dispute ended at last by an agreement to disagree, Aunt Cyarline said, "The onliest poppets I ever seed afore was them my paw follered cyarving out of a chunk of wood, and rosing their jaws with pokeberry, and burning eyes on 'em with a poker, and tying on black sheep's wool for hair. I allus follered making the same for my young uns and my grands."

"Me, too," said Aunt Ailsie. "And all the time, Cyarline, you and me never drempt there was sech lovelie creeters in this world as these!"

"I don't feel to part with this'n," said Aunt Cyarline. "Seems like I jest got to keep hit. I never seed nothing I liked so well. I could set up all night a-loving on hit!"

"I got me a fine lacy handkerchief off'n the women's tree at The Forks, and Lot a fine silk one; but I'd a sight ruther hit'd been a poppet!" declared Aunt Ailsie fervently.

Christine, overhearing, felt a real pang that there

were not enough dolls for the two old ladies to have some of their own.

"I'm dreadfully sorry there are'n't enough for you to have some now," she said to them, "but I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll promise to have one here for each of you by Old Christmas! Will that be all right?"

"Ef hit's got blue eyes and rosy jaws and yaller curls same as this'n," qualified Aunt Cyarline. Then, with an exhaustive look at Christine, "That gal she looks like a poppet herself," she said to Aunt Ailsie.

Aunt Ailsie shook her head somewhat sadly. "She's a red-head," she said, as if that precluded the idea.

"Hit's pretty, if hit is red," contended Aunt Cyarline with pleased eyes roaming over the red-gold hair.

Turning away from this naïve inventory of her charms and blemishes, and looking into the hungry eyes of the mothers and grannies as they feasted upon the brightness and beauty and color of the tree, Christine could almost have wept that there was nothing on it for them.

"I'm terribly sorry there's nothing for older folks," she said; "I didn't understand."

"If hit hain't oncivil to ax, 'pears like hit would pleasure me a sight to have one of them pretty chains to hang around my neck," said a tall, weary-looking woman, with one baby tugging vigorously at a bare breast and two or three others at her skirts. She spoke with evident hesitation, and pointed to one of the bright paper kindergarten chains.

"And a string of them berries would set well on me," said another. "I allus did love pretties so good!"

Christine was delighted. Paper chains and strings of holly berries were passed out to all the women-folk, and the festoons of popcorn were distributed among the least-ones, who ate them, strings and all, along with their candy. At last even the tiny candle-holders were given away, and the tree was left absolutely stripped.

After the guests, singing the praises and wonders of the tree, had all departed, little Lowizy lay in her bed again, exhausted and hacking, but blissful. Giles sat in a chair beside her; Christine and Uncle Lot were nearby; her new book and poppet lay in her arms.

Aunt Ailsie, who had gone out to help Phebe with the dinner, poked her head into the room to say to Uncle Lot, "Paw, have you tuck note of Lowizy's glass window there—how hit lets in the light so good for her to read her books?"

Uncle Lot rose and went to the window, which he examined carefully with both hand and eye. "Hit does let in a sight of light," he admitted; "for shet-ins like her I allow hit hain't a bad notion."

ELSIE SINGMASTER

Mrs. E. S. Lewars

"This story," says the author, "was written *con amore.* My grandmother, who was a member of our household until her death at an advanced age, was bereft of her husband during the Civil War, and from her I gained my first impression of the terror of war for women and children. She had, however, no battlefield experience.

"In writing the story I took very great pains to have all the details of the landscape and historical background accurate. I have never ceased to be astonished because almost all the Gettysburg stories were left for me to write!

"I was highly gratified when Miss Violet Oakley told me that she had used 'The Battlefield' as the basis of her large mural picture of Lincoln in the State Capitol at Harrisburg. There stands Mary Bowman with her arms uplifted, to remain when my little story is forgotten." But the reader, moved by this poignant story, will believe that it will be long remembered.

THE BATTLE-GROUND

From *Gettysburg*

MERCIFULLY, Mary Bowman, a widow, whose husband had been missing since the battle of Gettysburg, had been warned, together with the other citizens of Gettysburg, that on Thursday the nineteenth of November, 1863, she would be awakened from sleep by a bugler's reveillé, and that during the day she would hear again the dread sound of cannon.

Nevertheless, hearing again the reveillé, she sat up in bed with a scream and put her hands over her ears; then, gasping, groping about in confusion and terror, she rose. She was thin and pale, and her eyes had a set look, as though they saw other sights than those directly about her. She put on a dress which had been once a bright plaid, but which now, having lost both its color and the stiff, outstanding quality of the skirts of '63, hung in straight and dingy folds. It was clean, but it had upon it certain ineradicable brown stains on which soap and water had no effect.

In the bed from which she had risen lay her eight-year-old daughter; in a trundle-bed near by, her two sons, one ten years old, the other four. They slept heavily, as though they would never move. Their mother looked at them with her strange gaze; then she

barred a little more closely the broken shutters, and went down the stairs. The shutters were broken in a curious fashion; here and there they were pierced by round holes, and one hung from a single hinge. The window-frames were without glass, the floor was without carpet, the beds without pillows.

In her kitchen Mary looked about as though still seeing other sights. Here, too, the floor was carpetless. Above the stove a patch of fresh plaster showed where a jagged rent had been filled in; in the doors were the same little round holes as in the shutters of the room above. There was food and fuel, which was more than one might have expected from the appearance of the house and its mistress. She opened the shattered door of the cupboard, and, having made the fire, began to prepare breakfast.

Outside the house there was already, at six o'clock, noise and confusion. Last evening a train from Washington had brought Abraham Lincoln; for several days other trains had been bringing less distinguished guests, until thousands thronged the little town. This morning the tract of land between Mary Bowman's house and the village cemetery was to be dedicated for the burial of the Union dead, who were to be laid there in sweeping semicircles round a centre on which a tall monument was eventually to rise.

Of the dedication, of the President of the United States, of his distinguished associates, of the crowds, of the soldiers, of the crape-banded banners, Mary would

see nothing. She would sit in her little wrecked kitchen with her children; to her the President of the United States and others in high places who declared war or who tolerated war, who called for young men to fight, were hateful. To her the crowds of curious persons who coveted a sight of the vast battlefields were ghouls; their eyes wished to gloat upon ruin, upon fragments of the weapons of war, upon torn bits of the habiliments of soldiers; their feet longed to sink into the loose ground of hastily made graves; the discovery of a partially covered body was precious to them.

Mary Bowman knew that field! From Culp's Hill to the McPherson farm, from Big Round Top to the poorhouse, she had traveled it, searching, searching, with frantic, insane disregard of positions or of possibility. Her husband could not have fallen here among the Eleventh Corps, he could not lie here among the unburied dead of the Louisiana Tigers! If he was in the battle at all, it was at the Angle that he fell.

She had not been able to begin her search immediately after the battle because there were forty wounded men in her little house; she could not prosecute it with any diligence even later, when the soldiers had been carried to the hospitals, in the Presbyterian Church, the Catholic Church, the two Lutheran churches, the Seminary, the College, the Courthouse, and the tented hospital on the York road. Nurses were here, Sisters of Mercy were here, compassionate women were here by the score; but still she was needed, with

all the other women of the village, to nurse, to bandage, to comfort, to pray with those who must die. She had assisted at the amputation of limbs, she had helped to control strong men torn by the frenzy of delirium, she had tended poor bodies which had lost almost all semblance of humanity. Neither she nor any of the other women of the village counted themselves especially heroic; the delicate wife of the judge, the petted daughter of the doctor, the gently bred wife of the preacher forgot that fainting at the sight of blood was one of the distinguishing qualities of their sex; they turned back their sleeves and repressed their tears, and, shoulder to shoulder with Mary Bowman and her Irish neighbor, Hannah Casey, they fed the hungry and healed the sick and clothed the naked. If Mary had been herself, she might have laughed at the sight of her dresses cobbled into trousers, her skirts wrapped round the shoulders of sick men; but neither then nor ever after did Mary laugh at any incident of that summer.

Hannah Casey laughed, and by and by she began to boast. Meade, Hancock, Slocum were noncombatants beside her. She had fought whole companies of Confederates, she had wielded bayonets, she had assisted at the spiking of a gun, she was Barbara Frietchie and Moll Pitcher combined. But all her lunacy could not make Mary smile.

Of John Bowman no trace could be found. No one could tell anything about him, to Mary's frantic let-

ters no one responded. Her old friend, the village judge, wrote letters also, but could get no reply. Her husband was missing; it was probable that he lay somewhere upon this field, the field upon which they had wandered as lovers.

In midsummer a few trenches were opened, and Mary, unknown to her friends, saw them opened. At the uncovering of the first broad pit, she actually helped with her own hands. For those who know nothing of war, that fact may be written down, to be passed over lightly. The soldiers, having been on other battlefields, accepted her presence without comment. She did not cry, she only helped doggedly, and looked at what they found.

Immediately, an order went forth that no graves, large or small, were to be opened before cold weather. The citizens were panic-stricken with fear of an epidemic; already there were many cases of dysentery and typhoid. Now that the necessity for daily work for the wounded was past, the village became nervous, excited, irritable. Several men and boys were killed while trying to open unexploded shells; their deaths added to the general horror. Visitors sought in hospitals sons, husbands, brothers, sweethearts; with these the Gettysburg women were still able to weep, for them they were still able to care; but the constant demand for entertainment for the curious annoyed those who wished to be left alone to recover from the shock of battle. Gettysburg was prostrate, bereft of many of its worldly pos-

sessions, drained to the bottom of its well of sympathy. Cold weather was coming and there were many, like Mary Bowman, who owned no longer any quilts or blankets, who had given away their clothes, their linen, even the precious sheets which their grandmothers had spun. Gettysburg grudged nothing, wished nothing back, it asked only to be left in peace.

When the order was given to postpone the opening of graves till fall, Mary began to go about the battlefield searching alone. Her good, obedient children stayed at home in the house or in the little field. They were beginning to grow thin and wan, they were shivering in the hot August weather, but their mother did not see. She gave them a great deal more to eat than she had herself, and they wore far better clothes than her bloodstained motley.

She went about the battlefield with her eyes on the ground, her feet treading gently, anticipating loose soil or some sudden obstacle. Sometimes she stooped suddenly; to fragments of shells, to bits of blue or gray cloth, to cartridge belts or broken muskets, she paid no heed; at sight of pitiful bits of human bodies she shuddered. But there lay also upon the field little pocket-Testaments, letters, trinkets, photographs. John had had her photograph and the children's and surely he must have had some of the letters she had written!

One morning, late in August, she sat beside her kitchen table with her head on her arm. The first of

the scarlet gum leaves had begun to drift down from the shattered trees; it would not be long before the ground would be covered, and those depressed spots, those tiny wooden headstones, those fragments of blue and gray be hidden. The thought smothered her. She did not cry, she had not cried at all. Her soul seemed hardened, stiff, like the terrible wounds for which she had helped to care.

Hearing a sound, she looked up. The judge stood in the doorway; he had known all about her since she was a little girl; something in his face told her that he knew also of her terrible search. She did not invite him to sit down, she said nothing at all. She had been a loquacious person, she had become abnormally silent; speech hurt her.

The judge looked round the little kitchen. The rent in the wall was still unmended, the chairs were broken; there was nothing else to be seen but the table and the rusty stove and the thin, friendless-looking children standing by the door. It was the house not only of poverty and woe, but of neglect.

"Mary," said the judge, "how do you mean to live?"

Mary's thin, sunburned hand stirred a little as it lay on the table.

"I do not know."

"You have these children to feed and clothe and you must furnish your house. Mary—" The judge hesitated for a moment. John Bowman had been a school-teacher, a thrifty, ambitious soul, who would have thought it a

disgrace for his wife to earn her living. The judge laid his hand on the thin hand beside him. "Your children must have food, Mary. Come down to my house, and my wife will give you work. Come now."

Slowly Mary rose from her chair, and smoothed her dress and obeyed him. Down the street they went together, seeing fences still prone, seeing walls torn by shells, past the houses where the shock of battle had hastened the deaths of old persons and little children, and disappointed the hearts of those who longed for a child, to the judge's house in the Square. There wagons stood about, loaded with wheels of cannon, fragments of burst caissons, or with long, narrow, pine boxes, brought from the railroad, to be stored against the day of exhumation. Men were laughing and shouting to one another, the driver of the wagon on which the long boxes were piled cracked his whip as he urged his horses.

Hannah Casey congratulated her neighbor heartily upon her finding work.

"That'll fix you up," she assured her.

She visited Mary constantly, she reported to her the news of the war, she talked at length of the coming of the President.

"I'm going to see him," she announced. "I'm going to shake him by the hand. I'm going to say, 'Hello, Abe, you old rail-splitter, God bless you!' Then the bands'll play, and the people will march, and the Johnny Rebs will hear 'em in their graves."

Mary Bowman put her hands over her ears.

"I believe in my soul you'd let 'em all rise from the dead!"

"I would!" said Mary hoarsely. "I would!"

"Well, not so Hannah Casey! Look at me garden tore to bits! Look at me beds, stripped to the ropes!"

Details of the coming celebration penetrated to Mary's ears whether she wished it or not, and the gathering crowds made themselves known. They stood upon her porch, they examined the broken shutters, they wished to question her. She would answer no questions, would not let herself be seen. To her the occasion was horrible; she saw the battling hosts, she heard the roar of artillery, she smelled the smoke of battle, she was torn by its confusion. Besides, she seemed to feel in the ground beneath her a feebly stirring, suffering, ghastly host. They had begun to open the trenches, and she had looked into them.

Now, on the morning of Thursday, the nineteenth of November, her children dressed themselves and came down the steps. They had begun to have a little plumpness and color, but the dreadful light in their mother's eyes was still reflected in theirs. On the lower step they hesitated, looking at the door. Outside stood the judge, who had found time in the multiplicity of his cares, to come to the little house. He spoke with kind but firm command.

"Mary," said he, "you must take these children to hear President Lincoln."

"What!" cried Mary.

"You must take these children to the exercises."

"I cannot!" cried Mary. "I cannot! I cannot!"

"You must!" The judge came into the room. "Let me hear no more of this going about. You are a Christian, your husband was a Christian. Do you want your children to think it is a wicked thing to die for their country? Do as I tell you, Mary."

Mary rose from her chair, and put on her children all the clothes they had, and wrapped about her own shoulders a little black coat which the judge's wife had given her. Then, as one who steps into an unfriendly sea, she started out with them into the throng. Once more, poor Mary said to herself, she would obey. She had seen the platform; by going round through the citizens' cemetery she could get close to it.

The November day was bright and warm, but she and her children shivered. Slowly she made her way close to the platform, patiently she waited. Sometimes she stood with shut eyes, swaying a little. On the moonlit night of the third day of battle she had ventured from her house toward the Square to try to find some brandy for the dying men about her, and as in a dream she saw a tall general, mounted upon a white horse with muffled hoofs, ride down the street. Bending from his saddle he spoke apparently to the empty air.

"Up, boys, up!"

There rose at his command thousands of men lying asleep on pavement and street, and quietly, in an interminable line, they stole like dead men toward the

Seminary, to join their comrades and begin the long, long march to Hagerstown. It seemed to her that all about her dead men might rise now to look with reproach upon these strangers who disturbed their rest.

The procession was late, the orator of the day was delayed, but still Mary waited, swaying a little in her place. Presently the guns roared forth a welcome, the bands played, the procession approached. On horseback, erect, gauntleted, the President of the United States drew rein beside the platform, and with the orator and other famous men, dismounted. There were loud cheers, there were deep silences, there were fresh volleys of artillery, there was new music.

Of it all, Mary Bowman heard but little. Remembering the judge, whom she saw now near the President, she tried to obey the spirit as well as the letter of his command; she directed her children to look, she turned their heads toward the platform.

Men spoke and prayed and sang, and Mary stood still in her place. The orator of the day described the battle, he eulogized the dead, he proved the righteousness of this war; his words fell upon Mary's ears unheard. If she had been asked who he was, she might have said vaguely that he was Mr. Lincoln. When he ended, she was ready to go home. There was singing; now she could slip away, through the gaps in the cemetery fence. She had done as the judge commanded and now she would return to her house.

With her arms about her children, she started. Then some one who stood near by took her by the hand.

"Madam!" said he, "the President is going to speak!"

Half turning, Mary looked back. The thunder of applause made her shiver, made her even scream, it was so like that other thunderous sound which she would hear forever. She leaned heavily upon her little children, trying to get her breath, gasping, trying to keep her consciousness. She fixed her eyes upon the rising figure, she clung to the sight of him as a drowning swimmer in deep waters, she struggled to fix her thoughts upon him. Exhaustion, grief, misery threatened to engulf her, she hung upon him in desperation.

Slowly, as one who is old or tired or sick at heart, he rose to his feet, the President of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, the hope of his country. He stood waiting. In mighty waves of sound the applause rose and died and rose again. He waited quietly. The winner of debate, the fearless champion of a righteous cause, the veteran in argument, the master of men, he looked down upon the throng. The clear, simple things he had to say were ready in his mind, he had thought them out, written out a first draft of them in Washington, copied it in Gettysburg. It is probable that now, as he waited to speak, his mind traveled to other matters, to the misery, the wretchedness, the slaughter of this field, to the tears of mothers, the grief of widows, the orphaning of little children.

Slowly, in his clear voice, he said what he had to say. To the weary crowd, settling itself once more into position, the speech seemed short; to the cultivated who had been listening to the periods of elaborate oratory, it seemed commonplace, a speech which any one might have made. It was not so to Mary Bowman, nor to many other unlearned persons. Mary's soul seemed to smooth itself out like a scroll, her hands lightened their clutch on her children, the beating of her heart slackened, she gasped no more.

She could not have told exactly what he said, though later she read it and learned it and taught it to her children and her children's children. She only saw him, felt him, breathed him in, this great, common, kindly man. His gaze seemed to rest upon her; it was not impossible, it was even probable, that during the hours that had passed he had singled out that little group so near him, that desolate woman in her motley dress, with her children clinging about her. He said the world would not forget this field, these martyrs; he said it in words which Mary could understand, he pointed to a future for which there was a new task.

"Daughter!" he seemed to say to her from the depths of trouble, of responsibility, of care far greater than her own. "Daughter, be of good comfort!"

Unhindered now, amid the cheers, across ground which seemed no longer to stir beneath her feet, Mary Bowman went back to her house. There, opening the

shutters, she bent and solemnly kissed her little children, saying to herself that henceforth they must have more than food and raiment; they must be given some joy in life.

GRACE KING

The war between the states began while Grace King was a little girl on her father's plantation in lower Louisiana, and bitter memories of reconstruction days still linger with her from the days of her youth. The times made her grow up thoughtful, but her education and her environment emphasized the graces that disregard adversity. Her ancestry was Scotch, French, English and Irish; her school was that which figures in "Pupasse." New Orleans was passionately dear to her; she began to write her first book, *Monsieur Motte,* not only to show Creole life as she knew it, but to defend it against misrepresentations, and in *New Orleans: the Place and the People* she recaptured its distinctive charm while preserving its records of struggles, glories and disasters. "She represents the city," says the *Encyclopedia of Southern Literature,* "as a Parisian who came over two centuries ago to the banks of the Mississippi partly out of curiosity to see the new world, partly out of ennui, tired of the old, and who has become so well satisfied with the new surroundings that she has never cared to return to the mother country."

The great gentlemen of New Orleans, such as the old General in this story, had thus a double dislocation after the War; they were dislodged not only from financial security, but from something approaching feudal lordship. It is a scene

from this period and place that we watch in "A Drama of Three," taken from her volume *Balcony Stories* first published in 1893. As in the best of the novels and short stories with which Miss King has enriched the literature of the South, an ironic humor keeps the balance between comedy and tragedy. If this is a scene in the French manner, the civilization of this corner of America was throughout its formative period distinctively French. Latin influences still color the life of Louisiana; Grace King writes in the spirit of her time and her people.

A DRAMA OF THREE

From *Balcony Stories*

It was a regular dramatic performance every first of the month in the little cottage of the old General and Madame B——.

It began with the waking up of the General by his wife, standing at the bedside with a cup of black coffee.

"Hé! Ah! Oh. Honorine! Yes; the first of the month, and affairs—affairs to be transacted."

On those mornings when affairs were to be transacted there was not much leisure for the household; and it was Honorine who constituted the household. Not the old dressing gown and slippers, the old, old trousers, and the antediluvian neck-foulard of other days! Far from it. It was a case of warm water (with even a fling of cologne in it), of the trimming of beard and mustache by Honorine, and the black broadcloth suit, and the brown satin stock, and that *je ne sais quoi de dégagé* which no one could possess or assume like the old General. Whether he possessed or assumed it is an uncertainty which hung over the fine manners of all the gentlemen of his day, who were kept through their youth in Paris to cultivate *bon ton* and an education.

It was also something of a gala day for Madame la

Générale too, as it must be a gala day for all old wives to see their husbands pranked in the manners and graces that had conquered their maidenhood, and exhaling once more that ambrosial fragrance which once so well incensed their compelling presence.

Ah, to the end a woman loves to celebrate her conquest! It is the last touch of misfortune with her to lose in the old, the ugly, and the commonplace her youthful lord and master. If one could look under the gray hairs and wrinkles with which time thatches old women, one would be surprised to see the flutterings, the quiverings, the thrills, the emotions, the coals of the heart-fires which death alone extinguishes, when he commands the tenant to vacate.

Honorine's hands chilled with the ice of sixteen as she approached scissors to the white mustache and beard. When her finger tips brushed those lips, still well formed and roseate, she felt it, strange to say, on her lips. When she asperged the warm water with cologne, —it was her secret delight and greatest effort of economy to buy this cologne,—she always had one little moment of what she called faintness—that faintness which had veiled her eyes, and chained her hands, and stilled her throbbing bosom, when as a bride she came from the church with him. It was then she noticed the faint fragrance of the cologne bath. Her lips would open as they did then, and she would stand for a moment and think thoughts to which, it must be confessed, she looked forward from month to month. What a man

he had been! In truth he belonged to a period that would accept nothing less from Nature than physical beauty; and Nature is ever subservient to the period. If it is to-day all small men, and to-morrow gnomes and dwarfs, we may know that the period is demanding them from Nature.

When the General had completed—let it be called no less than the ceremony of—his toilet, he took his chocolate and his *pain de Paris*. Honorine could not imagine him breakfasting on anything but *pain de Paris*. Then he sat himself in his large armchair before his escritoire, and began transacting his affairs with the usual—

"But where is that idiot, that dolt, that sluggard, that snail, with my mail?"

Honorine, busy in the breakfast room:

"In a moment, husband. In a moment."

"But he should be here now. It is the first of the month, it is nine o'clock, I am ready; he should be here."

"It is not yet nine o'clock, husband."

"Not yet nine! Not yet nine! Am I not up? Am I not dressed? Have I not breakfasted before nine?"

"That is so, husband. That is so."

Honorine's voice, prompt in cheerful acquiescence, came from the next room, where she was washing his cup, saucer and spoon.

"It is getting worse and worse every day. I tell you, Honorine, Pompey must be discharged. He is worth-

less. He is trifling. Discharge him! Discharge him! Do not have him about! Chase him out of the yard! Chase him as soon as he makes his appearance! Do you hear, Honorine?"

"You must have a little patience, husband."

It was perhaps the only reproach one could make to Madame Honorine, that she never learned by experience.

"Patience! Patience! Patience in the invention of dullards and sluggards. In a well-regulated world there should be no need of such a thing as patience. Patience should be punished as a crime, or at least as a breach of the peace. Wherever patience is found police investigation should be made as for smallpox. Patience! Patience! I never heard the word—I assure you, I never heard the word in Paris. What do you think would be said there to the messenger who craved patience of you? Oh, they know too well in Paris—a rataplan from the walking-stick on his back, that would be the answer; and a 'My good fellow, we are not hiring professors of patience, but legs.'"

"But, husband, you must remember we do not hire Pompey. He only does it to oblige us, out of his kindness."

"Oblige us! Oblige me! Kindness! A negro oblige me! Kind to me! That is it; that is it. That is the way to talk under the new régime. It is favor, and oblige, and education, and monsieur, and madame, now. What child's play to call this a country—a government! I

would not be surprised"—jumping to his next position on this ever-recurring first of the month theme—"I would not be surprised if Pompey has failed to find the letter in the box. How do I know that the mail has not been tampered with? From day to day I expect to hear it. What is to prevent? Who is to interpose? The honesty of the officials? Honesty of the officials—that is good! What a farce—honesty of officials! That is evidently what has happened. The thought has not occurred to me in vain. Pompey has gone. He has not found the letter, and—well; that is the end."

But the General had still another theory to account for the delay in the appearance of his mail which he always posed abruptly after the exhaustion of the arraignment of the post office.

"And why not Journel?" Journel was their landlord, a fellow of means, but no extraction, and a favorite aversion of the old gentleman's. "Journel himself? You think he is above it, *hé?* You think Journel would not do such a thing? Ha! your simplicity, Honorine—your simplicity is incredible. It is miraculous. I tell you, I have known the Journels, from father to son, for—yes, for seventy-five years. Was not his grandfather the overseer on my father's plantation? I was not five years old when I began to know the Journels. And this fellow, I know him better than he knows himself. I know him as well as God knows him. I have made up my mind. I have made it up carefully that the first time that letter fails on the first of the month I shall have

Journel arrested as a thief. I shall land him in the penitentiary. What! You think I shall submit to have my mail tampered with by a Journel? Their contents appropriated? What! You think there was no coincidence in Journel's offering me his post-office box just the month—just the month, before those letters began to arrive? You think he did not have some inkling of them? Mark my words, Honorine, he did—by some of his subterranean methods. And all these five years he has been arranging his plans—that is all. He was arranging theft, which no doubt has been consummated to-day. Oh, I have regretted it—I assure you I have regretted it, that I did not promptly reject his proposition, that, in fact, I ever had anything to do with the fellow."

It was almost invariably, so regularly do events run in this world,—it was almost invariably that the negro messenger made his appearance at this point. For five years the General had perhaps not been interrupted as many times, either above or below the last sentence. The mail, or rather the letter, was opened, and the usual amount—three ten-dollar bills—was carefully extracted and counted. And as if he scented the bills, even as the General said he did, within ten minutes of their delivery, Journel made his appearance to collect the rent.

It could only have been in Paris, among that old retired nobility, who counted their names back, as they expressed it, *au de çà du déluge*, that could have been

acquired the proper manner of treating a *roturier* landlord: to measure him with the eyes from head to foot; to hand him the rent—the ten-dollar bill—with the tips of the fingers; to scorn a look at the humbly tendered receipt; to say: "The cistern needs repairing, the roof leaks; I must warn you that unless such notifications meet with more prompt attention than in the past, you must look for another tenant," etc., in the monotonous tone of supremacy, and in the French, not of Journel's dictionary, nor of the dictionary of any such as he, but in the French of Racine and Corneille; in the French of the above suggested circle, which inclosed the General's memory, if it had not inclosed—as he never tired of recounting—his star-like personality.

A sheet of paper always infolded the bank-notes. It always bore, in fine but sexless tracery, "From one who owes you much."

There, that was it, that sentence, which, like a locomotive, bore the General and his wife far on these firsts of the month to two opposite points of the horizon, in fact, one from the other— "From one who owes you much."

The old gentleman would toss the paper aside with the receipt. In the man to whom the bright New Orleans itself almost owed its brightness, it was a paltry act to search and pick for a debtor. Friends had betrayed and deserted him; merchants had failed with his money; bank presidents had stooped to deceive him; for he was an old man, and had about run the gamut of

human disappointments—a gamut that had begun with a C major of trust, hope, happiness, and money.

His political party had thrown him aside. Neither for ambassador, plenipotentiary, senator, congressman, not even for a clerkship, could he be nominated by it. Certes! "From one who owed him much." He had fitted the cap to a new head, the first of every month, for five years, and still the list was not exhausted. Indeed, it would have been hard for the General to look anywhere and not see some one whose obligations to him far exceeded this thirty dollars a month. Could he avoid being happy with such eyes?

But poor Madame Honorine! She who always gathered up the receipts, and the "From one who owes you much"; who could at an instant's warning produce the particular ones for any month of the past half-decade. She kept them filed, not only in her armoire, but the scrawled papers—skewered, as it were, somewhere else—where women from time immemorial have skewered such unsigned papers. She was not original in her thoughts—no more, for the matter of that, than the General was. Tapped at any time on the first of the month, when she would pause in her drudgery to re-impale her heart by a sight of the written characters on the scrap of paper, her thoughts would have been found flowing thus, "One can give everything, and yet be sure of nothing."

When Madame Honorine said "everything," she did not, as women in such cases do, exaggerate. When she

married the General, she in reality gave the youth of sixteen, the beauty (ah, do not trust the denial of those wrinkles, the thin hair, the faded eyes!) of an angel, the dot of an heiress. Alas! It was too little at the time. Had she in her own person united all the youth, all the beauty, all the wealth, sprinkled parsimoniously so far and wide over all the women in this land, would she at that time have done aught else with this than immolate it on the burning pyre of the General's affection? "And yet be sure of nothing."

It is not necessary, perhaps, to explain that last clause. It is very little consolation for wives that their husbands have forgotten, when some one else remembers. Some one else! Ah! there could be so many some one elses in the General's life, for in truth he had been irresistible to excess. But this was one particular some one else who had been faithful for five years. Which one?

When Madame Honorine solves that enigma she has made up her mind how to act.

As for Journel, it amused him more and more. He would go away from the little cottage rubbing his hands with pleasure (he never saw Madame Honorine, by the way, only the General). He would have given far more than thirty dollars a month for this drama; for he was not only rich, but a great *farceur*.

JAMES HALL

(1793–1868)

In 1820 James Hall left Pittsburgh and journeyed down the Ohio River towards Illinois on a flat-boat, seeking adventure. His life had not been without it already; he had been an officer in the army, fought three battles in the War of 1812, and gone to the Mediterranean with Decatur; now he was making an inland voyage as a preliminary to settling down. His mother, daughter of the provost of the University of Pennsylvania, educated "solely through social contacts with the circle in her father's home," married a Revolutionary soldier from Maryland, read everything that came her way, and made more than a local reputation as a writer. In their childhood she had "tumbled her sons into her library." One became editor of what was then the best known American magazine, *The Portfolio*, and it was to this that James proposed to send back reports of such scenes and characters as he might meet upon his journey. There were enough of these to make a book, *Letters from the West;* this was reprinted in England, where the *Quarterly* made fun of it and so hurt the author's feelings that he would never allow it to be again reprinted.

Quite possibly this sharpened the edges of his ideas about English emigrants as set forth in this sketch, but there can be no doubt that it shows them as they looked to the American pioneer of the period, who felt that no outsider could really understand the life of the New West. For this reason "The Emigrants" has an especial interest to readers of the American chapters of *Martin Chuzzlewit.*

By 1833 he had published not only *Legends of the West,* from which "The Emigrants" is taken, but also *The Harpes Head, The Soldier's Bride,* and *Selections from the Writings of Mrs. Sarah Hall.* The material for *Legends* was gathered while he was studying law. He became a lawyer in active practice, prosecuting attorney, circuit judge, and State Treasurer of Illinois; he started the third magazine in the Central West and its first—and last—gift book, *The Western Souvenir;* he published two volumes of *Sketches of History, Life and Manners of the West,* and its supplementary *Statistics of the West,* and wrote the literary and historical part of McKinney and Hall's *History of the Indian Tribes of North America.* He came to Cincinnati in the golden thirties, when but one city west of the Alleghenies exceeded her in population; in 1835 he became cashier of a leading bank and then its president till his death. His cool head, hot temper, and "dear good heart" carried him through a torrent of work. There is, however, nothing torrential about his literary style, which moves for the most part as deliberately as one of his own flat-boats. Most of "The Emigrants" is description, whether of character or of landscape, but it is description of such singular fidelity that it brings back—as in the picture of the blossoming prairie—an America long passed. If these are photographs rather than moving pictures, their historic value is none the less.

THE EMIGRANTS

From *Legends of the West*

The season of the year was that which poets delight to describe: when the birds are singing their sweetest notes, and the trees assuming the beautiful hues of spring. The snows were melting on the mountains, and the channels of those little streams which, at a later season, murmured quietly along their valleys, were now filled to their brinks with foaming torrents. The Ohio was swollen to a great flood, filling its deep channel to the brim; and its tide was crowded with the vessels and passengers who throng the great avenues of commerce at this propitious season. Among the boats were many of that description in which families emigrating to the West usually descended the Ohio, before the introduction of steamboats into general use. These were large flatboats, unfit to stem the current, and so constructed as to float with the stream. Though slow and unwieldy, they were large, safe, and roomy, affording space enough for families, merchandise, and even cattle.

One fine morning, a boat of the kind described was seen to approach the landing-place at a small town on the Ohio. The passengers sprung joyously ashore, as if delighted to escape from their confinement. It was an English family, just arrived from the old country. Mr.

Edgarton, the head of this little band of adventurers, was a man of about thirty-five, sprightly, and good-looking, but rather oddly accoutred; for his dress exhibited a whimsical mixture of fashion and rudeness. He wore cambric ruffles, a diamond breast-pin, a dandy waistcoat, and a store of jewelry appended to a gold watch-chain; but his nether limbs were clad in long spatter-dashes, reaching to the knee, a farmer's coarse frock covered his shoulders, and a great fur cap was on his head. He was equipped, moreover, with a powder-horn, shot-pouch, and bird-bag, and held in his hand an elegant double-barrelled gun. We mention these things to show how difficult it is for men to throw off their accustomed habits, and to assume those which are suitable to a change of country or condition. Mr. Edgarton, when at home, was a modest, and a well-dressed man; but in attempting to assume the guise of a farmer and the equipment of a hunter, had jumbled together a grotesque assortment of costume, which gave him the appearance of a stage-player dressed for exhibition, more than that of a plain man of business, which was his real character. His wife was a genteel, handsome woman; a neat article, and neatly put up; for her dress was as graceful as herself; and the children, some four or five in number, looked as fresh and rosy as the morning. Then there was a maid, a grayhound, a pug-dog, and a parrot, all in good order and well conditioned.

There was another member of the family, whom I

have reserved, as in duty bound, for a separate mention. This was Mr. Edgarton's sister, a fair lady whose age, if it be not impolite to specify too particularly on so delicate a point, was somewhere on the *right side* of twenty. . . . Julia Edgarton was handsome enough to pass for a beauty in any country; she was sentimental enough to admire the beauties of nature, yet not so sentimental as to travel with a pencil in her hand or a book in her reticule; she had just affectation enough to be very agreeable, for a handsome woman should always have a slight tinge of coquetry; she had taste enough to enjoy the writings of Scott, but not so much as to enable her to dream over the rhapsodies of Byron. . . .

The goods and chattels of this party were numerous, but not bulky, nor particularly well assorted. The *knick-nacks* considerably outnumbered the useful articles—indeed, there was no end to those *nondescript* contrivances which brother Jonathan very aptly denominates *notions*. Of household furniture there was but little; of farming utensils there was rather more than a little; the latter consisting chiefly of new inventions, remarkably neat and useless—horse-rakes, patent ploughs, straw-cutters, and man-traps. The heaviest article of transportation was the wardrobe, which was sufficient to have furnished a respectable slop-shop. The stores of linen and flannel, the dozens upon dozens of night-caps and socks, the coats, great-coats, frock-coats, coatees, and surtouts, provided to suit every occasion and contingency, were absolutely miraculous.

[*At home, Mr. Edgarton had been a clerk who had prospered in business and "determined to exchange the smoke of London for the pure air of the country. While in this state of mind he heard golden accounts of the back settlements in America, and was easily persuaded to emigrate to the land of promise.*"]

After sauntering through the village, the members of our voyaging party were about to re-embark, when a person approached them, and without the ceremony of an introduction, inquired civilly of Mr. Edgarton, if he would accommodate him with a passage in his boat. Surprised at the abruptness of the salutation, the eyes of the whole party were turned towards the stranger. He was a young man apparently not more than twenty-one years of age. His athletic form was clothed in the common dress of the Western hunter. A loose hunting-shirt of blue cotton trimmed with yellow fringe, and confined about the waist with a broad leathern belt, set off his person to the best advantage. From one shoulder was suspended a powder-horn, from the other a huge leathern pouch, in the belt of which rested a long knife. There was nothing remarkable in his appearance, except that his form towered above the ordinary height, and that a rifle which he held carelessly in his hand was double the size of an ordinary weapon, and seemed fit only for the grasp of a giant. His cheek had the flush of youth, his eye was mild, and his countenance open and ingenuous, yet the rifle and the hunting-knife gave him so much the appearance of an assassin in the inexpe-

rienced eyes of the Englishman, that the latter was not a little startled at being addressed by such an apparition with:

"Pray, sir, can I get the favour of a passage down the river in your boat?"

The first sensation of a travelling Englishman which is awakened on such an occasion is that of pride; and Mr. Edgarton, being quite indignant at being asked to *take a passenger*, replied coldly, "Mine is not a passage boat!"

"So I suppose from her looks; she seems to be rather a crazy kind of concern, but I am not particular about that; I can put up with any thing."

"We have no wish to increase our company," said the Englishman.

The young man looked surprised, and seemed to think himself rudely treated; his eye brightened, and the colour deepened upon his cheek, but without making any reply he turned on his heel and walked away.

[*But the following evening, they come upon the same hunter, struggling with an infuriated deer, go to his rescue and take him on board, where Mr. Edgarton now "pressed him to remain with a cordiality which sufficiently atoned for his former rudeness."*]

The young stranger, whom we shall call Logan, was a native of Kentucky, who had been reared in the practice of all the athletic exercises and sports of his country, while his intellect had been cultivated by the best

instruction which that region afforded. His fine form and vigorous understanding corresponded well with each other, and he possessed in a high degree that hilarity of disposition and ease of manner which so often distinguish his countrymen. Having studied law, he determined to emigrate to a newer State than his own, and had reached the Ohio river when the accidental loss of his horse, and the want of means to purchase another, induced him to proceed on foot. He accordingly sold his saddle, bridle, and other equipments, and having purchased a rifle and hunting-shirt, was about to renew his journey, when the boat of Mr. Edgarton stopped at the village in which he happened to be. Disappointed in his attempt to procure a passage, he manfully threw the small valise containing his wardrobe over his shoulder, and struck into the woods about the same time at which the Englishman's boat departed; but as the latter floated with the current round a circuitous bend of the river, while Mr. Logan pursued a shorter path which led across the country, they met again as we have stated.

Where all parties are disposed to be pleased with each other, cordiality is quickly established. The family of Edgarton, accustomed to the excitement of a city life, and to the enjoyment of the various expedients by which the idle hours of persons in easy circumstances are amused in the British metropolis, had begun to tire of the silence and monotony of the forest and the confinement of a boat. To them, therefore, the accession of an agreeable member to their party was not an unim-

portant event; and no sooner did Mr. Edgarton ascertain that the person whom he had before treated with so much indifference was a gentleman of easy manners and cultivated mind, than he felt his curiosity awakened and feelings of kindness springing up in his bosom towards the stranger. As for Mr. Logan, he was infinitely amused at the odd ways of the emigrants, their strange notions about matters and things in America, and especially with their cultivation and intelligence in other respects as contrasted with their total ignorance of this country, and the childlike simplicity with which they wondered at everything that attracted their attention. Besides, Miss Julia Edgarton, as we said before, was a very pretty young lady, and, as we did *not* say before, sang like a nightingale and talked like a book; and having been for some time deprived of all society but that of the married pair, the children, pug-dog, and parrot aforesaid, was of course delighted, however unwilling she might have been to confess it, to obtain a more suitable companion, and altogether disposed to exert her powers of pleasing in his behalf.

Thus organized, the party began to realize the pleasures of travelling—those pleasures which ever await such as have sufficient taste and good temper to enjoy them. The Edgartons displayed their books, their engravings, their knick-nacks, and exotic curiosities, and endeavored to edify the young American with descriptions of the magnificence and the wonders of London, while the latter was equally communicative in relation

to his own country, and especially that portion of it through which they were passing. . . .

[*The river journey ended, they asked a native where they might get a mail-coach.*]

"Well, stranger, it's my sentimental belief that there isn't a coach, male or female, in the country."

"This fellow is ignorant of our meaning," said Edgarton to Logan.

"What's that you say, stranger? *I s'pose maybe* you think I never *seed* a coach? Well, it's a free country, and every man has a right to think what he pleases; but I reckon I've saw as many of *them are fixens* as any other man. I was raised in Tennessee. I saw General Jackson once riding in the elegantest carriage that ever mortal man *sot* his eyes on—with glass winders to it like a house, and *sort o'* silk *curtings*. The harness was mounted with silver, it was *drawd* by four blooded nags, and *druv* by a mighty likely *nigger* boy."

The travellers passed on, and soon learned that there was indeed no stage in the country. Teams and carriages of any kind were difficult to be procured; and it was with some difficulty that two stout wagons were at last hired to carry Mr. Edgarton's moveables, and a *dearborn* obtained to convey his family, it being agreed that one of the gentlemen should drive the latter vehicle while the other walked, alternately. Arrange-

ments were accordingly made to set out the next morning.

The settlement in which Mr. Edgarton had judiciously determined to pitch his tent, and enjoy the healthful innocence and rural felicity of the farmer's life, was new; and the country to be traversed to reach it entirely unsettled. There were two or three houses scattered through the wilderness on the road, one of which the party might have reached by setting out early in the morning, and they had determined to do so. But there was so much fixing and preparing to be done, so much stowing of baggage and packing of trunks, such momentous preparations to guard against cold and heat, hunger and thirst, fatigue, accident, robbery, disease, and death, that it was near noon before the cavalcade was prepared to move. Even then they were delayed some minutes longer to give Mr. Edgarton time to oil the screws and renew the charge of his double-barrel gun and pocket-pistols. In vain he was told there were no highwaymen in America. His way lay chiefly through uninhabited forests; and he considered it a fact in natural history, as indisputable as any other elementary principle, that every such forest has its robbers. After all, he entirely neglected to put flints in his bran new locks instead of the wooden substitutes which the maker had placed there to protect his work from injury; and thus "doubly armed," he announced his readiness to start with an air of truly comic heroism.

When they began their journey, new terrors arose. The road was sufficiently plain and firm for all rational purposes; that is to say, it *would do* very well for those who only wanted to get along, and were content to make the best of it. It was a mere path beaten by a succession of travellers. No avenue had been cut for it through the woods; but the first pioneers had wound their way among the trees, avoiding obstacles by going round them, as the snake winds through the grass, and those who followed had trodden in their footsteps, until they had beaten a smooth road sufficiently wide to admit the passage of a single wagon. On either side was the thick forest, sometimes grown up with underbrush to the margin of the *trace*, and sometimes so open as to allow the eye to roam off to a considerable distance. Above was a dense canopy of interwoven branches. . . .

The day was far advanced when they began to rise to more elevated ground than that over which they had travelled. The appearance of the woods was sensibly changed. They were now travelling over a high upland tract with a gently-waving surface, and instead of the rank vegetation, the dense foliage and gloomy shades by which they had been surrounded, beheld woodlands composed of smaller trees thinly scattered and intermingled with rich thickets of young timber. The growth though thick was low, so that the rays of the sun penetrated through many openings, and the beaten path which they pursued was entirely exposed to

the genial beams. Groves of the wild apple, the plum, and the cherry, now in full bloom, added a rich beauty to the scene and a delightful fragrance to the air.

But the greatest natural curiosity and the most attractive scenic exhibition of our Western hemisphere was still in reserve; and a spontaneous expression of wonder and delight burst from the whole party, as they emerged from the woods and stood on the edge of *a prairie*. They entered a long vista, carpeted with grass, interspersed with numberless flowers, among which the blue violet predominated; while the edges of the forest on either hand were elegantly fringed with low thickets loaded with blossoms—those of the plum and cherry of snowy whiteness, and those of the crab-apple of a delicate pink. Above and beyond these were seen the rich green, the irregular outline, and the variegated light and shade of the forest. As if to produce the most beautiful perspective, and to afford every variety of aspect, the vista increased in width until it opened like the estuary of a great river into the broad prairie, and as our travellers advanced the woodlands receded on either hand, and sometimes indented by smaller avenues opening into the woods, and sometimes throwing out points of timber, so that the boundary of the plain resembled the irregular outline of a shore as traced on a map.

Delighted with the lovely aspect of Nature in these the most tasteful of her retreats, the party lingered along until they reached the margin of the broad

prairie, where a noble expanse of scenery of the same character was spread out on a larger scale. They stood on a rising ground, and beheld before them a vast plain, undulating in its surface so as to present to the eye a series of swells and depressions, never broken nor abrupt, but always regular, and marked by curved lines. Here and there was seen a deep ravine or drain, by which the superfluous water was carried off, the sides of which were thickly set with willows. Clumps of elm and oak were scattered about far apart like little islands; a few solitary trees were seen, relieving the eye as it wandered over the ocean-like surface of this native meadow.

[*At dusk on the second day, they reached the house, of a farmer, who, though he did not keep an inn, was "well off," "had houseroom enough and plenty to eat," and "of course" would entertain any stranger.*]

On arriving at the place, they were a little disappointed to find that the abundance of *houseroom* which had been promised them was a mere figure of speech, an idiomatic expression by a native, having a comparative signification. The dwelling was a long house, differing from others only in being of a larger size and better construction. The logs were hewed and squared instead of being put up in their original state, with the bark on; the apertures were carefully closed, and the openings representing windows, instead of being stopped

when urgent occasion required the exclusion of the atmosphere, by hats, old baskets, or cast-off garments, were filled with glass, in imitation of the dwellings of more highly civilized lands. The wealth of this farmer, consisting chiefly of the *plenty to eat* which had been boasted, was amply illustrated by the noisy and numerous crowd of chickens, ducks, turkeys, pigs, and cattle, that cackled, gobbled, and grunted about the house, filling the air with social though discordant sounds, and so obstructing the way as scarcely to leave room for the newly-arrived party to approach the door.

As the cavalcade halted, the foremost driver made the fact known by a vociferous salutation.

"Hal-low! Who keeps house?"

A portly dame made her appearance at the door, and was saluted with,—

"How de do, ma'am—all well, ma'am?"

"All right well, thank you, sir."

"Here's some strangers that wants lodging; can we get to stay all night with you?"

"Well, I don't know; *he's* not at home, and I harly know what to say."

"I'll answer for *him*," replied the driver, who understood distinctly that the pronoun used so emphatically by the good lady alluded to her inferior moiety; "he wouldn't turn away strangers at this time of day when the chickens is jist goin' to roost. We've ben a travellin' all day, and our critters is mighty tired and hungry, as well as the rest of us."

"Well," said the woman, very cheerfully, "I reckon you can stay; if you can put up with such fare as we have, you are very welcome. My man will be back soon; he's only jist gone up to town."

The whole party were now received into the dwelling of the backwoodsman by the smiling and voluble hostess, whose assiduous cordiality placed them at once at their ease in spite of the plain and primitive, and to them uncomfortable aspect of the log house. . . . It was composed of two large apartments or separate cabins, connected by an area or space which was floored and roofed, but open at the sides, and which served as a convenient receptacle to hang saddles, bridles, and harness, or to stow travellers' baggage, while in fine weather it served as a place in which to eat or sit.

In the room into which our party was shown there was neither plastering nor paper, nor any device of modern ingenuity to conceal the bare logs that formed the sides of the house, neither was there a carpet on the floor, nor any furniture for mere ornament. The absence of all superfluities and of many of the conveniences usually deemed essential in household economy was quite striking. A table, a few chairs, a small looking-glass, some cooking utensils, and a multitudinous array of women's apparel, hung round on wooden pins, as if for show, made up the meagre list, whether for parade or use, with the addition of several bedsteads closely ranged on one side of the room, supporting beds

of the most plethoric and dropsical dimensions, covered with clean cotton bedding, and ostentatiously tricked out with gaudy, parti-coloured quilts.

The "man" soon made his appearance, a stout, weather-beaten person, of rough exterior, but not less hospitably disposed than his better half, and the whole household were now actively astir to furnish forth the evening's repast, nor was their diligent kindness, nor the inquisitive though respectful cross-examination which accompanied it, at all diminished when they discovered that their guests were English people. Soon the ample fireplace, extending almost across one end of the house, was piled full of blazing logs; the cries of affrighted fowls and other significant notes of preparation announced that active operations were commenced in the culinary department. An array of pots and kettles, skillets, ovens, and frying-pans, covered the hearth, and the astonished travellers discovered that the room they occupied was not only used as a bedchamber, but "served them for parlour, and kitchen, and hall."

We shall not attempt to describe the processes of making bread, cooking meat and vegetables, and preparing the delightful beverage of the evening meal, a portion of which took place in the presence of the surprised and amused guests, while other parts were conducted under a shed out of doors. A large table was soon spread with clean linen, and covered with a profusion of viands such as probably could not be found on the board of the mere peasant or labouring farmer in any

other part of the world. Coffee was there, with sweet milk and buttermilk in abundance; fried chicken, venison, and ham; cheese, sweetmeats, pickles, dried fruit, and honey; bread of wheat and corn, hot biscuits and cakes, with fresh butter; all well prepared and neat, and all pressed upon the hungry travellers with officious hospitality. Had the entertainment been furnished in regal style at some enchanted castle by invisible hands, the guests could scarcely have been more surprised by the profusion and variety of the backwoods repast, so far did the result produced exceed the apparent means afforded by the desolate-looking and scantily-furnished cabin.

If our worthy travellers were surprised by the novelties of backwoods *inn*-hospitality which thus far had pressed upon them, how much was their wonder increased when the hour for retiring arrived, and the landlady apologized for being obliged to separate the guests from their entertainers.

"Our family is so large," said the woman, "that we have to have two rooms. I shall have to put all of you strangers into a room by yourselves."

The party were accordingly conducted into the other apartment, which was literally filled with arrangements for sleeping, there being several bedsteads, each of which was closely curtained with sheets, blankets, and coverlids hung around it for the occasion, while the whole floor was strewed with pallets. Here Mr. Edgarton and his whole party, including Logan and the

teamsters, were expected to sleep. A popular poet, in allusion to this patriarchal custom, impertinently remarks,

> "Some cavillers
> Object to sleep with fellow-travellers."

And on this occasion the objection was uttered vehemently, the ladies declaring with one voice that martyrdom in any shape would be preferable to lodging thus like a drove of cattle. Unreasonable as such scruples might have seemed, they were so pertinaciously adhered to on the one side, and so obstinately resisted by the exceedingly difficult nature of the case on the other, that there is no knowing to what extremities matters might have gone, had not a compromise been effected by which Logan and the wagon-drivers were transferred into the room occupied by the farmer's family, while the Edgartons, the sister, the maid, the grayhound, the pug-dog, and the parrot, remained sole occupants of the apartment prepared for them.

A few more hours brought them to the place of their destination. Mr. Edgarton had as yet no house, nor any spot selected for his residence. In choosing a neighbourhood, he had been directed by the advice of some English friends, but he had now to exercise his own judgment in purchasing land and erecting buildings. He found the inhabitants kind and hospitable, especially in giving him such advice and information as his situation required, and many eligible spots were pointed

out to him on the vacant lands of the government. An Englishman, however, drop where he may, considers it his prerogative to know more about the country than its own inhabitants, and our emigrant wisely concluded that he was the best judge of his own business. He looked for a picturesque spot. Unacquainted with the nature of soils, or the business of farming, he imagined that rural occupations could be carried on as successfully at one place as at another, and having pleased his eye on the surrounding scenery, was satisfied that he had found all that was necessary to happiness. His fancy was attracted by a long arm of the prairie reaching back into the forest to the vicinity of a large rivulet. In the depth of this recess he placed his house, so that its front commanded a view of the widening vista, while its sides and rear were embowered in woods. In vain was he told that the prairie at this point was low and flat, that the soil was a cold sterile clay, and that the surface being concave retained the water. He could drain it; the most dreary morasses had been reclaimed in England. In vain was he told that the rivulet in the rear of his house annually overflowed its banks, leaving standing pools, and creating noxious vapours. He would convert these inundated lands into meadows, and become a benefactor to the country by abating a nuisance. His little cottage was soon reared upon the spot at which he intended, at some future day, to build a splendid mansion, and the delighted man, surrounded by scenes as beautiful as the most

romantic fancy could imagine, sat down contented in the solitary wilderness.

[*He lays down on paper a plan of the prospective farm, and Miss Julia colours it very handsomely.*]

The next thing was to put these splendid plans into operation; but Mr. Edgarton now found, to his surprise, that it was almost impossible to procure labourers. The first settlers of a new country are farmers who do their own work, and but few persons could be found who would work for hire. With great difficulty a few men were employed at extravagant prices; the buildings were deferred until another year, and the enclosing the fields commenced. Planting was out of the question, because the ground was too wet; draining was attempted, but for this also the season was unpropitious, and after a vast expenditure of labour and money, Mr. Edgarton found that he had scarcely advanced a step towards accomplishing the herculean task before him. . . . Troubles thickened on every side; the sturdy peasantry afforded no society for the polished inmates of the cottage, and the advantages of rural felicity began to be doubted. Often did Mr. and Mrs. Edgarton wish themselves back again in their snug back parlour in one of the smokiest streets of London; and as often did the pretty Julia wish to see Mr. Logan, who was understood to be figuring at the bar of a neighbouring county.

[*Summer comes, with mosquitoes. "Where the mosquito sings, the malaria is brooding not far distant." The whole family, save Julia, is stricken.*]

Week after week rolled heavily away. The Edgartons, parents and children, still withered in the grasp of the pestilence. Julia, pale and worn down with fatigue and watching, was their devoted nurse. . . . A physician came as often as his duty to others would permit; the neighbours were kind, but they were few, and their own cares often called them away. Then came the long, the solitary, the anxious hours, when poor Julia, left alone with her heavy charge, had need of all her fortitude to support her.

At last her agony became insupportable, and she left the chamber of disease for the purpose of refreshing herself for a moment in the open air. As she stepped out of the door a brilliant light attracted her attention, and she discovered to her surprise that the southern horizon glowed with a resplendent blaze, which threw its radiance over the whole landscape, and rendered every object as distinctly visible as at noonday. The prairie was on fire! The novelty of the spectacle could be equalled only by its splendour. The fire itself was not yet visible, in consequence of the rising ground that intervened, but the spot where it raged was distinctly indicated by a strong and vivid glare, which extended along the horizon from east to west. Above were seen heavy volumes of smoke rolling upwards in masses of inky blackness, tinged with a fiery redness on those

parts which were exposed to the reflection of the element. The foreground of the scene was a prairie, covered with dried and yellow grass, illumined with a fearful and peculiar radiance. Here and there stood a solitary tree, tinged with light on one side and throwing from the other a shadow of supernatural length across the plain. The forest on either side was thrown back into a deep shade, which bounded the prospect, except where here and there a point of timber, running out into the prairie like a cape into the ocean, became exposed to the full glare of the fire, and presented its hues and outlines distinctly to the eye. All was still and silent; no animated object was seen upon the plain, not a sound was heard except that occasioned by the conflagration, a low, incessant roaring resembling the distant but tremendous rush of waters.

The fire had now reached the most elevated grounds, and was seen advancing in a long line, fanned by a breeze from the south. Its march was slow but fearfully regular. Then the breeze died away and was succeeded by a calm. The smoke now curled upwards for a short distance, and then descended in thick volumes upon the plain, discolouring the atmosphere, and giving a red and ghastly hue to the surrounding objects.

Julia Edgarton gazed at this scene with intense interest. At first its sublime beauty awakened a lively feeling of admiration; and she watched with timid wonder the progress of an element always awful when raging uncontrolled in its splendid and terrific majesty; but

when the flame was seen extending across the whole plain, and advancing towards the dwelling that contained the helpless objects of her affection, heart sickness and unconquerable panic filled her bosom. In another hour perhaps that dwelling would be surrounded by the flames, and they must all perish together. Her first impulse was to fly; but the selfish thought was instantly banished, and she resolved rather to die than forsake her charge. A slight noise drew her attention, and looking round she beheld several animals that she knew to be wolves, crouching upon the ground, and glaring upon her with their fierce eyeballs. By a sure instinct they had scented the house of death, and waited for their prey. Julia rushed distractedly into the house.

[*At this crisis, Logan appears:*—]

. . . her hand was grasped with a gentle pressure, a tender voice pronounced her name, she turned and sunk weeping with joy and gratitude upon the shoulder of Logan.

He bore the afflicted girl into the open air, and having assured her that the danger from the fire was much less than she apprehended, she had courage to contemplate again the terrific scene. The line of flame was advancing slowly toward the house, extending entirely across the plain in front, and into the woods on either side. As it rolled on, the flames were seen darting upward, like agitated waves, and the spectator could

scarcely resist the idea that a sea of flaming liquid was spreading its boiling and foaming billows over the land. The heat was now intense; the roaring and cracking sounds of the conflagration, as deafening as the din of a tempest. On it swept until it reached the beaten ground in the vicinity of the house, which afforded no fuel, and there the flame separated into two divisions, and passing along on either hand, swept away the fences, the stacks and other combustibles, leaving nothing but the solitary cottage and its wretched inmates upon that widespread and smoking plain.

Julia acknowledged her gratitude to God, and felt that, although in a land of strangers, and surrounded by dangers, she had now one Friend whose hand is mighty to save those who put their trust in Him.

[*The action ends here, but the reader, after the fashion of the period, is told what becomes of the characters. The neighbors nurse the family back to health, Logan and Julia are married, and Mr. Edgarton gives up his agricultural schemes and settles in the neighboring village where his talents as a trader renew his prosperity.*]

CAROLINE M. KIRKLAND

(1801–1864)

When Caroline Stansbury married Professor William Kirkland of Hamilton College, N. Y., she went with him to Michigan, where they lived for some time. This was in 1839, when the back-country districts beyond Detroit were immensely interesting to a keen-eyed woman with a sense of humor—not too strong to spoil a fact for a story; a woman to whom everything was new and nothing too bad to be funny. She was well read, too, and not averse to putting what she saw and heard into sketches like those in an admired book of the period, Miss Mitford's *Our Village*. These appeared in a little volume *A New Home—Who'll Follow?* under the name of "Mrs. Mary Clavers," perhaps with an eye to the neighbors, out of consideration for whose feelings she is said slightly to have glossed some of the details. But in the main it is truly "a veritable history, an unimpeachable transcript of reality; a rough picture, in detached parts, but pentagraphed from the life," of which she begs her readers to believe that "whatever is quite unnatural, or absolutely incredible, is to be taken as literally true."

In 1842 she came to New York, opened a girls' school and wrote improving literature of one sort or another. But

her great day was over: it had been in her "New Home," among neighbors who would borrow even the baby unless restrained—as she tells in the chapter "Lend me your ears"—and with schoolteachers fantastic as Ichabod Crane, or public characters like the politician brought back by this collection. *Forest Life*, a novel, and *Western Clearings* used up what literary material was left from her brief contact with the frontier. But her first book deserves to be kept alive; indeed, even under library dust it keeps itself alive and laughing.

For whatever the blue-stocking Caroline Kirkland—who prefaced the story that follows with no less than three appropriate quotations, two in the original French of Racine and of Rochefoucauld—might think about the rawness and rudeness of Michigan lands and people, there can be no doubt that "Mrs. Mary Clavers" had "imbibed a taste for the wilderness . . . a yearning, common to those who have lived in the free woods,

" 'To forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.' "

THE POLITICIAN

From *A New Home—Who'll Follow?*

Mr. Simeon Jenkins entered at an early stage of his career upon the arena of public life, having been employed by his honoured mother to dispose of a basket full of hard-boiled eggs, on election day, before he was eight years old. He often dwells with much unction upon this his debût; and declares that even at that dawning period, he had cut his eye-teeth.

"There wasn't a feller there," Mr. Jenkins often says, "that could find out which side I was on, for all they tried hard enough. They thought I was soft, but I let 'em know I was as much baked as any on 'em. 'Be you a dimocrat?' says one. 'Buy some eggs and I'll tell ye,' says I; and by the time he'd bought his eggs, I could tell well enough which side *he* belonged to, and I'd hand him out a ticket according, for I had blue ones in one end o' my basket, and white ones in the other, and when night come, and I got off the stump to go home, I had eighteen shillin' and four pence in my pocket."

From this auspicious commencement may be dated Mr. Jenkins' glowing desire to serve the public. Each successive election day saw him at his post. From eggs he advanced to pies, from pies to almanacs, whiskey, powder and shot, foot-balls, playing-cards, and at

length, for ambition ever "did grow with what it fed on," he brought into the field a large turkey, which was tied to a post and stoned to death at twenty-five cents a throw. By this time the still youthful aspirant had become quite the man of the world; could smoke twenty-four cigars per diem, if anybody else would pay for them; play cards, in old Hurler's shop, from noon till day-break, and rise winner; and all this with suitable trimmings of gin and hard words. But he never lost sight of the main chance. He had made up his mind to serve his country, and he was all this time convincing his fellow-citizens of the disinterested purity of his sentiments.

"Patriotism," he would say, "patriotism is the thing! any man that's too proud to serve his country ain't fit to live. Some thinks so much o' themselves, that if they can't have jist what they think they're fit for, they won't take nothing; but for my part, *I* call myself an American citizen; and any office that's in the gift o' the people will suit *me*. I'm up to anything. And as there ain't no other man about here,—no suitable man, I mean—that's got a horse, why I'd be willing to be constable, if the people's a mind to, though it would be a dead loss to me in my business, to be sure; but I could do any thing for my country. Hurra for patriotism! them's my sentiments."

It can scarcely be doubted that Mr. Jenkins became a very popular citizen, or that he usually played a conspicuous part at the polls. Offices began to fall to his

share, and though they were generally such as brought more honour than profit, office is office, and Mr. Jenkins did not grumble. Things were going on admirably.

> The spoils of office glitter in his eyes,
> He climbs, he pants, he grasps them—

Or thought he was just going to grasp them, when, presto! he found himself in the minority; the wheel of fortune turned, and Mr. Jenkins and his party were left undermost. Here was a dilemma! His zeal in the public service was ardent as ever, but how could he get a chance to show it unless his party was in power? His resolution was soon taken. He called his friends together, mounted a stump, which had fortunately been left standing not far from the door of his shop, and then and there gave "reasons for my ratting" in terms sublime enough for any meridian.

"My friends and feller-citizens," said this self-sacrificing patriot, "I find myself conglomerated in sich a way, that my feelin's suffers severely. I'm sitivated in a peculiar sitivation. O' one side, I see my dear friends, pussonal friends—friends, that's stuck to me like wax, through thick and thin, never shinnyin' off and on, but up to the scratch, and no mistake. O' t' other side I behold my country, my bleedin' country, the land that fetch'd me into this world o' trouble. Now, sence things be as they be, and can't be no otherways as I see, I feel kind o' screwed into an auger-hole to know what to

do. If I hunt over the history of the universal world from the creation of man to the present day, I see that men has always had difficulties; and that some has took one way to get shut of 'em, and some another. My candid and unrefragable opinion is, that rather than remain useless, buckled down to the shop, and indulging in selfishness, it is my solemn dooty to change my ticket. It is severe, my friends, but dooty is dooty. And now, if any man calls me a turn-coat," continued the orator, gently spitting in his hands, rubbing them together, and rolling his eyes round the assembly, "all I say is, let him say it so that I can hear him."

The last argument was irresistible, if ever the others might have brooked discussion, for Mr. Jenkins stands six feet two in his stockings, when he wears any, and gesticulates with a pair of arms as long and muscular as Rob Roy's. So, though the audience did not cheer him, they contented themselves with dropping off one by one, without calling in question the patriotism of the rising statesman.

The very next election saw Mr. Jenkins justice of the peace, and it was in this honourable capacity that I have made most of my acquaintance with him, though we began with threatenings of a storm. He called to take the acknowledgment of a deed, and I, anxious for my country's honour, for I too am something of a patriot in my own way, took the liberty of pointing out to his notice a trifling slip of the pen; videlicet, "Jus-

tas of Piece," which manner of writing those words I informed him had gone out of fashion.

He reddened, looked at me very sharp for a moment, and then said he thanked me; but subjoined,

"Book-learning is a good thing enough where there ain't too much of it. For my part, I've seen a good many that know'd books that didn't know much else. The proper cultivation and edication of the human intellect has been the comprehen*sive* study of the human understanding from the original creation of the universal world to the present day, and there has been a good many ways tried besides book-learning. Not but what that's very well in its place."

And the justice took his leave with somewhat of a swelling air. But we are excellent friends, notwithstanding this hard rub; and Mr. Jenkins favours me now and then with half an hour's conversation, when he has had leisure to read up for the occasion in an odd volume of the Cyclopedia, which holds an honoured place in a corner of his shop. He ought, in fairness, to give me previous notice, that I might study the dictionary a little, for the hard words with which he arms himself for these "keen encounters," often push me to the very limits of my English.

I ought to add, that Mr. Jenkins has long since left off gambling, drinking, and all other vices of that class, except smoking; in this point he professes to be incorrigible. But as his wife, who is one of the nicest women

in the world, and manages him admirably, pretends to like the smell of tobacco, and takes care never to look at him when he disfigures her well-scoured floor, I am not without hopes of his thorough reformation.

[*The schoolhouse of Montacute and two of its teachers:*—]

I might indeed have given a description of the building as it now smiles upon me from the opposite side of the public square. But the reader may imagine St. Paul's, St. Peter's, the Parthenon, the mosque of St. Sophia, or any edifice of that character, and then think of the Montacute schoolhouse as something inexpressibly different, and he will have as good an idea of it as I could give him in half a page. I think it resembles the Temple of the Winds more nearly than any other ancient structure I have read of; at least, I have often thought so in cold weather, when I have beguiled the hours of a long sermon by peeping through the cracks at the drifting snow; but it is built of unplaned oak-boards, and has no under-pinning; and the stove-pipe, sticking out of one window, looks rather modern; so the likeness might not strike every body.

The school-ma'am, Miss Cleora Jenkins, I have elsewhere introduced to the reader. From April till October, she sways "the rod of empire"; and truly may it be said,

There through the summer-day
Green boughs are waving,

though I believe she picks the leaves off, as tending to defeat the ends of justice. Even the noon-spell shines no holiday for the luckless subjects of her domination, for she carries her bread and pickles rolled up in her pocket-handkerchief, and lunches where she rules, reading the while "The Children of the Abbey,"—which took her all summer,—and making one of the large girls comb her hair by the hour.

During the snowy, blowy, wheezy, and freezy months, the chair has been taken—not filled—by Mr. Cyrus Whicher,—not Switcher,—a dignitary who had "boarded round" till there was very little of him left. I have been told, that when he first bore the birch,—in his own hand I mean,—he was of a portly and rather stolid exterior; had good teeth and flowing locks; but he was, when I knew him, a mere cuticle—a "skellinton," as Mr. Weller would say—shaped like a starved greyhound in the collapsed stage, his very eyes faded to the colour of the skim-milk which has doubtless constituted his richest potation, since he attained the empty honours of a district school.

When he came under my care, in the course of his unhappy gyrations, I did my best to fatten him; and, to do him justice, his efforts were not lacking: but one cannot make much progress in one week, even in cramming a turkey poult, and he went as ethereal as he came.

One additional reason for his "lean and hungry" looks I thought I discovered in his gnawing curiosity of soul—I suppose it would be more polite to say, his burning thirst for knowledge. When he first glided into my one and only parlour, I asked him to sit down, expecting to hear his bones rattle as he did so. To my astonishment he noticed not my civility, but, gazing on the wall as who should say—

"Look you, how pale he glares!"

he stood as one transfixed.

At length—"Whose profile is that?" he exclaimed, pointing to a portrait of my dear, cheerful-looking grand-mamma—a half-length, by Waldo.

I told all about it, as I thought, but left room for a dozen questions at least, as to her relationship—whether by father or mother's side—her age when the picture was taken, etc., etc., etc.; and Mr. Whicher's concluding remark, as he doubled up to sit down, was—

"Well! she's a dreadful sober-lookin' old critter, ain't she now!" But ere he touched the chair, he opened again like a folded rule out of a case of instruments, and stood erect save head and shoulders.

"Is that a pi-anner?" he asked with a sort of chuckle of delight. "Well! I heard you had one, but I didn't hardly believe it. And what's this thing?" twirling the music-stool with all his might, and getting down on

his poor knees to look underneath both these curiosities.

"Jist play on it, will you?"

"Dinner is ready, Mr. Whicher: I will play afterwards."

He balanced for one moment between inanition and curiosity; then, "with his head over his shoulder turn'd," he concluded to defer pleasure to business. He finished his meal by the time others had fairly begun; and then, throwing himself back in his chair, said, "I'm ready whenever you be."

I could not do less than make all possible speed, and Mr. Whicher sat entranced until he was late for school: not so much listening to the tinkling music, as prying into the nature and construction of the instrument, which he thought must have taken "a good bunch o' cypherin'."

That week's sojourn added a good deal to the schoolmaster's stores of knowledge. He scraped a little of the crystallized green off my inkstand to find out how it was put on; pulled up a corner of the parlour-carpet, to see whether it was "wove like a bed-spread"; whether it was "over-shot or under-shot"; and not content with ascertaining by personal inspection the construction of every article which was new to him, he pumped dry every member of the household, as to their past mode of life, future prospects, opinions of the country, religious views, and thoughts on every im-

aginable subject. I began to feel croupish before he left us, from having talked myself quite out.

One of his habits struck me as rather peculiar. He never saw a letter or a sealed paper of any kind that he did not deliberately try every possible method, by peeping, squeezing, and poking, to get at its contents. I at first set this down as something which denoted a more than usually mean and dishonest curiosity; but after I had seen the same operation performed in my presence without the least hesitation or apology, by a reverend gentleman of high reputation, I concluded that the poor schoolmaster had at least some excuse for his ill-breeding.

HAYDEN CARRUTH

"Challenging the spaces of the West," says Professor Turner in *The Frontier in American History*, "it is not strange that the pioneers dealt in the superlative and saw their destiny with optimistic eyes. . . . Men moved, in their single life, from Vermont to New York, from New York to Ohio, from Ohio to Wisconsin, from Wisconsin to California, and longed for the Hawaiian Islands. When the bark started from their fence rails, they felt the call to change. They were conscious of the mobility of their society and gloried in it."

"With the Past we have literally nothing to do, save to dream of it," said Gratz Brown in an oration on July Fourth, 1850, when Old Man Doggett of Hayden Carruth's story was on the move. "Its lessons are lost and its tongue is silent. We are ourselves at the head and front of all political experience. Precedents have lost their virtue and all their authority is gone."

It is seldom safe to quote Fourth of July oratory as ironclad authority for facts, but no one with America in his blood can fail to recognize the fidelity with which this speech represents a state of mind. The free land that lured men westward then, the "sunset regions" toward which "fair freedom's star" pointed in the days when Hamlin Garland's parents migrated with him three times before he was eleven, have been long

since all allotted. But the effect of their presence somewhere on our sunset horizon for so many decades has by no means faded from our national consciousness.

The story of the fleeing Mr. Doggett, after whom the American locomotive had been in full cry for half a century without coming up to him for any length of time, is a production of Hayden Carruth's youth, which has appeared, until now, only in the pages of the *Century Magazine*. There I read it thirty years ago, remembering it so well that it was one of the first tales to which I turned as a nucleus for this collection. The very town in which its action takes place has the cardboard quality, the temporary makeshift tone of a civilization on the move. It is no stage-trick that sends the old wanderer to his last sleep in a covered wagon. And if the story is amusing, so, for all its hardships, was the life on the road, always going somewhere.

DOGGETT'S LAST MIGRATION

From *The Century Magazine, October, 1892*

THE funeral was over, and the Old Man looked somewhat disconsolate. I refer to Old Man Doggett of Broken Bow. Mr. Doggett's baptismal name is in my possession, but few knew it in Broken Bow; fewer still cared anything about it. It was, in fact, a name which the elderly Mr. Doggett used in his dealings with the United States government, and for no other purpose, and it looked odd even to him when he saw it on land-office papers.

The Old Man, as I have intimated, did not look particularly cheerful, but his actions were far from denoting despondency. It was Mrs. Doggett, sharer of his joys and sorrows—mostly sorrows—for something over forty years in a zigzag course from the Eastern States to his present location in the Territory of Dakota—it was Mrs. Doggett, I say, who had departed this life. Mrs. Doggett had been a faithful, patient wife, and had gone to the reward of this kind of wives. Her funeral had been numerously attended by the people from the eleven houses which made up the city of Broken Bow, and from the score or so of settlers' "shacks" scattered about on the prairie in the neighborhood. Hers was the first death to come upon Broken Bow. She had been laid at rest in the Prairie View

Cemetery,—"thus," in the well-chosen words of the Broken Bow *Van-Guard*, "inaugurating this sacred spot so thoughtfully set aside in the Third Ward by the founders of our city."

The ancient Mr. Doggett sat in front of the Settler's Home hotel as the hazy October sun sank toward the west. A few fellow-citizens surrounded him in easy attitudes. Nobody said much. Each was engaged in the laborious work of watching the down of the ripened milkweeds, which, ignoring the metropolitan claims of the city, was floating lazily about. Justice of the Peace Barlow came up and sat down near the Old Man. After moving about uneasily for a minute or two, this worthy ornament of the bench offered a few words of condolence to the bereaved old gentleman. "Yes," replied the latter; "it is a little hard on me at my time of life. I'm gettin' old, Jedge."

"Pretty well along for this country, that's so," assented the ingenuous Barlow; "but back in the States, now, you wouldn't be so very vener'ble, Old Man."

"No; you're right," answered Doggett. "But I'm goin' to miss her, I reckon, specially when I move West. She was very handy at movin'. Prob'bly she had to be," he added thoughtfully; "we h'isted West sev'ral times."

This produced a faint smile on the faces of his hearers, not because there seemed to be anything incongruous in the idea of going West on the banks of the Missouri River, but because the Old Man had been

talking of it ever since he arrived a year ago, and the public had lost faith. "The Old Man will never go West no more than me," Bill Dows had once announced sententiously; but since Bill had gone to that region inside of a week after being thus moved to prophecy, not much was thought of his view.

"Miranda," continued the Old Man after a pause, "was most remarkably handy at cookin' outdoors. I al-'ays liked to set on the wagon-tongue when we camped, an' take care o' the children an' the dogs, an' watch her toss up the skillet an' flip a flap-jack. Never knowed her to fail but once, an' that was thirty year ago in Injeana. I'm goin' to miss her on the road, an' that's a fact. But I can't help it. I reckon I'll start to-morrow. Boys," he added, with a fairly cheerful if not wholly necessary oath,—"boys, come in an' have a drink."

I scarcely need to say, I suppose, that the old gentleman's call to the thirsty was unanimously heeded by the group around the open door of the Settler's Home. Nor need I say, probably, that his apparent callousness to the loss of his wife met with unfavorable comment on the part of the few women of Broken Bow. Woman will stand abuse, but not neglect; her husband may be a tyrant so long as he is miserable during her absence. The women of Broken Bow were holding an informal meeting at the house of Justice Barlow, opposite the Settler's Home.

"I tell you, it is scandalous the way the Old Man acts," announced Mrs. Barlow, who made a specialty

of "speaking her mind." "Such a man don't deserve a wife; for my part, I can't see why the Lord let him have one as long as he did. And after she'd moved West with him twenty times if she had once, too. It ain't any light thing to sleep in a wagon and get meals over a fire on the ground—I've tried it." The excellent Mrs. Barlow seemed to believe that the late Mrs. Doggett's outdoor perambulating housekeeping should cause her bereaved spouse to melt into tears if nothing else would, and this view of the case was generally shared by the other women present. But the Old Man found one champion even among them, though I am bound to say that she was an unmarried woman, knowing but little about the undeserving creature, man. This was Miss Holley, the schoolmistress.

"I think," said Miss Holley, the schoolmistress, "that the Old Man feels worse than we know; I was talking with him yesterday. He doesn't know any better than to act the way he does; he thinks it would be unmanly to show any grief. But he means well, I am sure."

Miss Holley was regarded with a mingled expression of pity and contempt by the experienced married women present, so she said no more in defense of the unpopular Mr. Doggett. But when, as it began to grow dusk, she went out to go to her "claim," which she was "holding" a half-mile from town, and where she was obliged to stay a night or two each week to appease an exacting government, she met the Old Man on the

corner. There was a touch of unsteadiness in the old gentleman's legs, and truth compels me to confirm the penetrating reader's worst suspicions, and to admit that it came from the too industrious absorption of Broken Bow liquor, a fiery fluid utterly unfit for either man or beast. But the Doggett mind was clear and active.

"Good evenin', Miss Holley," he said. "Goin' out to comply with the law, eh? He, he!" The superfluous laugh came from the same cause as the undesirable unsteadiness.

"Yes, Mr. Doggett," answered Miss Holley, as she turned toward him, and the rich, soft light of the sunset lighted up her face. "Are you going home now?"

"I dunno. Reckon I'd better?"

"Yes; I think so. You've been drinking, Mr. Doggett."

The Old Man's first impulse was to say, "S'posin' I have?" but he thought better of it. Her tone showed that she was sorry. This surprised him,—he was not accustomed to anything of the kind,—and it also touched him. But he decided that it was safer to remain facetious. So he said: "That's so, Miss Holley; but the Gover'ment ain't made no law that a man on a claim can't drink, has it? Ain't we got no rights left, nohow?" and the old humorist laughed querulously. He noticed as the light still flooded her face how handsome she was.

"Your wife would not have liked to know that you were going to get drunk to-day." The girl looked at

him steadily. The Old Man bowed his head. His stooped form was outlined against the golden sky, which burned far off across the level prairie.

"I ain't so very drunk, am I?" asked the Old Man in an apologetic tone.

"No, you are not very drunk; but why did you get drunk at all?"

The Old Man's head sank still lower, and he was silent for a full minute. Finally he answered:

"I dunno. I hadn't oughter. I didn't know what else to do. I was lonesome. It's lonesome ev'rywhere now. I ain't goin' home; it's lonesomer there than anywhere else."

"Yes; you would better go home. It is the best place for you, even if it is lonesome. Come, I will go part way with you."

The Old Man looked at her doubtfully, and then started off along the mark across the prairie which, by a stretch of courtesy prompted by intense local patriotism, was called a road. They went in silence some distance, the girl slightly in advance, the Old Man with his head bowed. Then she paused and turned, this time with her back to the dying west, while the fading light, now gray and almost gloomy, fell on the face of the Old Man.

"There," she said, "it is only a quarter of a mile farther. You will go, will you not?"

"Yes, Miss Holley; I will. It's the best place for me. But it is lonesome there without her—mighty lonesome.

I reckon I never knowed how much company she was till now."

"Yes, yes; but you must try to be as cheerful as you can. You know you are going West some day."

"You believe it, do you?" answered the Old Man, eagerly. "Of course you do; you're sens'ble. You know when a man says that he's goin' West that he means it. The rest of 'em don't believe it, but I knowed you did all the while. Of course I'm goin' West; of course. You've got some sense."

"Yes, you are going West again some day," replied the girl; "but not now—not this fall. You must stay here this winter, and go in the spring."

"No, can't do that; I must go now. I don't like this country; it's gettin' too much settled up. They're talkin' of a railroad comin' through here, an' somehow I don't like 'em. This land don't suit me, anyhow. They say there's the best land in the world in the Hills. I'm goin' across the reservation into the Hills. I'm goin' alone; there's nobody to go with me now, except Tige an' the hosses. They're better 'n nothin', but they can't talk, though Tige barks in sev'ral diff'rent ways. It'll be lonesome travelin' without her—an' her heart was set on the trip. She didn't like it here no more than me. She was of the 'pinion that the s'ciety wa'n't what it oughter be. She never liked the way that town crowd tries to put on airs, an' act stuck up. But she al'ays said you was a nice girl; I reckon she knowed you believed we was goin' West."

"Perhaps," assented the other, with a faint smile. "She was a good woman, and I am sure it will be very hard for you to move West without her. But I must go now. Good night; you will go home now, won't you?" and she put out her hand for his. Shaking hands was a form of social dissipation which the Old Man had largely risen above, but after some hesitation he extended his hand. She took it, pressed it slightly, gathered up a white shawl about her shoulders, and walked away through the dry grass toward her little eight-by-ten house now faded out of sight across the prairie in the fast-gathering darkness. The Old Man gazed after her in considerable bewilderment. He looked at the hand she had taken in hers, and was somewhat reassured on finding that it appeared to be in its normal condition. Then he looked back toward the town, and saw the lights in the Settler's Home. He took a step in that direction, then turned and started for home with a fairly resolute tread. "I'll go home, as she told me to," he said. "She's the smartest girl in the Territory; she knows what's the thing for me to do, and she knows I am goin' West." His pace slackened a little, and he was silent. "There's Tige and the hosses, anyhow. They'll be some company, but not much. Oh, it's lonesome without her! It's—" The Old Man's voice choked, but he walked on. Soon he came to a little depression in the prairie through which the road ran, and he stopped, and by the last faint light from the west, and the fainter light from the stars, he gathered a bunch of the wild sunflowers

which grew there, and which had all day been tossed about on their long, graceful stems by the south wind. Then the Old Man, with the flowers in his hand, went on through the darkness to the place he called home.

At the time of which this history treats the American locomotive had been in full cry after the fleeing Mr. Doggett for over half a century. It had not come up with him for any length of time. There are sailors who never go down to the sea in ships,—born wanderers of the land, latter-day gipsies,—who look upon a covered wagon and a team of horses as a true-born sailor looks upon his ship. Mr. Doggett first saw the light of day near the Atlantic seaboard, but he soon abandoned the neighborhood. He found the region too crowded. It seemed stuffy and poorly ventilated to him. While still toiling in that fertile portion of the late Noah Webster's incomparable speller which is devoted to words of two syllables, he turned his attention to newspaper reports of the West, and especially of the farms which a paternal government was disposing of at a nominal price. So one night he went away from home, leaving parents behind who consoled themselves with ten other little Doggetts. He tarried in Ohio a few years, where he was married, and accumulated property to the extent of a wagon with a white cover, a team consisting of one mule and one horse, a gloomy cow, and four dogs. Then he began his great retreat from the locomotive in good earnest, which, at the time I write of, had consisted of twenty or thirty distinct removals, and had marked

out an uncertain line from the Buckeye State to the Missouri River, reaching at one time as far south as Arkansas, and on another occasion as far north as Manitoba. His weakness for Government land had increased rather than diminished, and the number of "claims" which he had owned in different States and Territories was something startling, especially when we remember, as inexorable fact forces us to do, that after the first one or two, he had no right to them. But the old gentleman's conscience in regard to dealings with the Government was elastic, as I regret to say the consciences of men occupying higher positions in the social scale sometimes are. During all this time, in which he never lived longer than five years in one place, Mrs. Doggett had been his uncomplaining companion. She was not a born wanderer, and sometimes she looked at old and well kept homes, with their great shade-trees, and ample barns, and moss-roofed houses, and sighed; but said nothing; and wandering finally became a second nature to her. Children had come to cheer the Doggetts. At one time in Illinois six of them had gathered about the blazing fire beside the wagon, and watched their father industriously cleaning his rifle, and listened to his optimistic remarks on the amount of game he proposed to bag the next day. Two of the offspring had been born in the wagon, which always gave them a slightly warmer place in their father's heart. But the life had not seemed to agree with the little ones, and they had gone away to a land of fewer hardships, one in Kentucky, two in

Missouri, one in Iowa, another in far-off Manitoba, as they camped by the lonely Red River of the North; and the last, a promising boy of fifteen, who could shoot with great accuracy, and get the better of the other fellow in swapping horses three times out of four, in western Minnesota, where the Doggett home had temporarily been before it was moved to Broken Bow for another transitory pause.

Through all his troubles the Old Man had preserved a considerable degree of cheerfulness. He usually drowned his sorrows by moving West. He had determined to pursue this course on the present occasion. But he trudged along through the darkness with a heavy heart, and when he pushed open the door of his one-room house and went in, the place seemed very solemn and very lonely. He lighted a smoky lantern, and laid the sunflowers on the table. Then he sat down, and for a long time gazed at the dim and flickering light. Tige, a battle-scarred dog which had fought everything that two states and three territories could furnish, claimed his attention, but did not get it. At last he arose, and looked about the room through the semi-darkness. He took down his rifle from the wall, examined it, and put it back in its place. "Yes," he said, half aloud; "I must start in the morning. It's too lonesome to stay here. I'll show 'em that I can go. Miss Holley knows I'm goin' now." Then his eye rested on the sunflowers, and he took them up. "I'll go an' put 'em on her grave,"

he said. "There can't nobody see me now." He went out, and started back along the path. There was no moon, but the stars were shining, though the sky was hazy. The fresh, steady south wind swept unhindered across the level plain with a sharp, almost hissing sound in the long, dry prairie-grass,—"grass," as had been aptly remarked by the Broken Bow *Van-Guard*, "so rich in albuminous and nitrogenous matter as to actually fatten stock to the point of ridiculous obesity." It was a strong, sweeping wind, such as blows only on great mid-continent plains, or at sea. There was no cloud in sight, but the pall of haze was over the whole sky. The Old Man recognized it as smoke from distant prairie-fires. He looked about, but saw only a dull glow in the sky far to the south, which showed a fire there, but many miles away. Sometimes a tumbleweed, that odd but intelligent prairie product which spends the summer in growing round and bigger than a bushel-basket that it may break off at the top of the ground in September and travel with the wind for two or three months—sometimes one of these vagrant weeds would bound across his path and go rolling on in the darkness toward the north. This was the nearest approach to life which greeted the Old Man. He noticed that the lights of the hopeful young city of Broken Bow were extinguished. He walked straight to the grave, which was on slightly higher ground than the little clump of houses. The long grass had been trampled down for a few feet around the low mound. The Old Man stood and

looked down upon it for several minutes. Then he placed the yellow flowers near the head. He stepped back, and sat down on a sod which had not been replaced. He clasped his hands about his knees, his head bent forward, and he sat gazing at the dim outlines of the mound before him. Tige, who had followed him from the house, crept up, and lay down with his head on his master's feet. The wind swept over them, the dog crept closer, and the Old Man's head gradually sank lower. Soon both slept, the man deeply, the dog lightly, and the blundering tumbleweeds were left in possession of the scene.

Three hours later the Old Man was awakened from his slumber by a dismal howl close to his ear. He started nervously, turned his head, and found himself face to face with the dog, which sat on the ground in apparent deep distress of mind. The Old Man started to bestow a malediction of a highly profane nature upon the animal, when he caught sight of his own and the dog's shadow upon the mound before him. He raised his eyes to the northern sky, but it was even darker than when he had gone to sleep. The truth rushed in upon him. He leaped to his feet, and turned to the south, and saw a prairie-fire coming up with the wind. It seemed scarcely a half-mile away. Black, burned-out grass stems were falling all about. To the east and to the west, as far as he could see, there was the same wall of fire, the tongues of flame leaping up fiercely and lapping up the long, dry grass before them. And back

of them was the wind with its sweeping rush. The Old Man first thought of his own house, but he remembered that one of the last things which his wife had done before her sickness was to make him build a fire-brake around it, something he was ever adverse to doing till the fire was actually in sight. Then he thought of the rising city of Broken Bow, lying all unprotected. And here I may crave a line to say that the prairie community is usually like the Old Man in the matter of fire-brakes: it needs the stimulating influence of the approaching fire to make it go out and plow the two circles of furrows and burn the grass between them necessary for protection. And though Broken Bow had during the fall constructed (on paper) a courthouse and several other important buildings, and had welcomed (in the imaginative columns of the *Van-Guard*) the entrance of two railroads, she had utterly failed to provide the means of preserving the eleven houses which she really possessed. The Old Man did not pause after he realized the condition of the town. He seized his hat from where it had blown on the ground, and rushed away to give the alarm. In a few minutes he was pounding on the door of Judge Barlow's house. This able jurist put his head out of the window, instantly grasped the situation with his fine judicial mind, and retreated to clothe himself properly for the occasion, while the Old Man hurried away and began thundering on other doors, Tige began a judicious barking, which aroused the town dogs, and aided the good work of waking the other inhabitants from

their dreams of city halls, trunk-lines, and so forth. In five minutes Broken Bow was making vigorous arrangements to welcome the coming fire. But Old Man Doggett was not among his fellow-citizens. He was rushing away across the prairie, straight toward the fire, to warn Miss Holley. I suppose that the Old Man ran faster than he ever had run before. Already a great cloud of smoke rolled above his head, and the grass-cinders, still glowing, fell around him. He could see the little square, shed-roofed house ahead of him, standing a small black cube against the horizon of flame. The fire seemed almost upon it, but the Old Man did not despair of reaching it first. Tige kept well in advance, barking wildly. As they drew nearer, and the Old Man felt the hot breath of the fire in his face, the dog caught the idea of the proceedings, and rushed farther ahead, and began scratching at the door of the humble dwelling and barking with fresh vigor. As the Old Man came up he saw a white face where the curtain was drawn aside at the one little square window. The flames were leaping higher than the house in the tall blue-joint grass a hundred yards away. "Dress yourself, an' hurry out here!" shouted the Old Man, above the crackling of the fire. The tarred paper which covered the roof was already burning. The face disappeared, and the dog ran to his master and crouched in terror of the approaching flames. The Old Man turned and faced what seemed a black cavern to the north; then he dropped on his knees in the long grass and drew forth some matches.

His hand trembled, and he broke the first one. The wind blew out the second. He shielded the third with his hat, and thrust it into a dry bunch of grass before him. It caught and blazed up in his face. The dog leaped back and growled at the new fire. It caught the next bunch, and then the bunch to the right, and the one to the left. The wind took it up and swept it away to the north, leaving an oasis of black. The Old Man stamped out the feeble line of fire which tried to beat southward. He turned to the house as Miss Holley rushed out. The flames reached around the little dwelling from each side as if to shut her in, but she slipped through, and ran with the Old Man to the new-made place of safety. The flames came up to its edge, reached over, found nothing, leaped up angrily, and went out. In ten minutes the main fire, sweeping on to each side of the oasis, had overtaken the little saving fire and rushed away to the north. Nothing was left burning behind but the frail house. The strong sweep of the wind came again cool and fresh. The Old Man brought a buffalo skull, lying like a great white bovine ghost in the midnight black of the ashes, and Miss Holley sat down upon it, for she was weak and faint. They watched the wall of fire as it hurried away, only broken narrowly in one place by the Eagle Butte trail. The opening was slight, and the flames joined hands above it. But suddenly a horse and rider broke through the fiery door of the trail. The horse staggered and almost fell, and the rider reeled, but they came on, with the horse on a

quick nervous gallop. Miss Holley rose with a cry, and took a few steps forward. The horse dashed up and stood trembling as the rider, a tall young man, threw himself off and clasped the girl in his arms.

"Thank God, Kitty, you are saved!" said the young man. She hid her face against his breast. Then they looked into each others' eyes.

"The Old Man saved me," said the girl. The young man took her hands tightly in his, and they turned to where Doggett had stood. They saw him walking away across the black plain toward his own house, with the dog close behind.

The people of Broken Bow did not return to their beds for what remained of the night, though the fire soon went past, and this metropolitan center was saved. Before long Miss Holley and Morton came, leading the scorched and frightened pony, and received the congratulations of the entire population on their escape. The good work of their fellow-citizen, Mr. Doggett, was generally recognized. But the old gentleman did not appear in town, though the sullen glare of the fire on the northern sky was chased away before the reddening east. It was proposed by Mr. Peter Gatchell, the editor of the *Van-Guard,* who had during the excitement as ably guided the plow as he habitually did the pen, that a public meeting be called to pass suitable resolutions of thanks to the Old Man for his night's work. This met with an enthusiastic welcome, as the idea of a public meeting always did in Broken Bow. The

task of calling the meeting was somewhat simplified by the fact that every man, woman, and child in the town was already gathered in the post office. A chairman was elected, and Mr. Gatchell appointed to prepare the resolutions. In a half-hour he reported to the meeting with his work done. I will refrain from giving these resolutions in this place, able as they were, but will refer the reader to that week's issue of the *Van-Guard*. They were adopted unanimously, and a committee of five, headed by Justice Barlow, was appointed to present them to the Old Man. As the sun, big and red, rose up out of the blackened plain, the committee started for the home of the individual to be honored. When they arrived, knocking having brought no response, they pushed open the door and entered. The room was bare of even the little furniture which it usually held. The rifle was gone from its place. Neither the Old Man nor Tige was anywhere visible. But, pinned to the wall by a two-pronged fork, they found this:

> Fellow Citizens and ladys and gentlemen:
> Tige done it.
> Yurs respeckfully,
> A. Doggett
> P.S. We hev gone West.

So the committee went back and reported a failure.

But the next afternoon the news came that the Old Man's horses had wandered back alone, and were at

their late home. A party, headed by Morton, were soon galloping over the trail to the west. They wound down a ravine to the Missouri just as the sun was sinking behind the barren bluffs on the other side. A little down the stream, near the swift-flowing, milky waters, they came upon the Old Man's covered wagon. The campfire of the night before had gone out. The horses' harness lay on the ground, and the yellow leaves from a giant cottonwood were scattered over it. The gurgle of an eddy in the river was the only sound. Tige stood sullen guard under the wagon, and growled angrily when the men came nearer and dismounted. But he knew Morton, and allowed him to go to the front of the wagon. He drew aside the flap and looked in. Then he let it fall, and said:

"It was too much for the Old Man. He will never go West again."

In his pocket they found a faded daguerreotype in an old-fashioned black case. The women at Broken Bow said it was a school-girl picture of the Old Man's wife.

HAMLIN GARLAND

As for the life of Hamlin Garland, is it not written in *A Son of the Middle Border* and *A Daughter of the Middle Border?*—to remain, for as long as we read our records, part of the documentation of our Westward drive. If, as F. J. Turner has said in *The Frontier in American History,* "up to our own day American history has been in a large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West," we can scarce overestimate the part that these books—with *Trail-makers of the Middle Border,* which precedes them chronologically—have taken in making clear to coming generations the cost in human effort of thus pushing forward the frontier. That this document of our history should be also one of the ornaments of our literature is another reason why America honors the Middle Border saga.

The story here chosen to represent Mr. Garland is from *Main-Travelled Roads,* with which in the nineties he made an emphatic entrance into our literature. There is more than the slight resemblance of titles to connect the reception of this book with that of Sinclair Lewis's first great success, thirty years afterward. "Mrs. Ripley's Trip" is almost the first story that Mr. Garland ever wrote. "I began it," he says, "in a bleak little cabin in Dakota, where my parents were liv-

ing in August, 1887. It was suggested by a story which my mother told me of an old neighbor in Iowa."

Hard weather and hard work color all the stories in *Main-Travelled Roads*, and about the lives of its people there is something gnarled and fiercely resistant, like old apple-trees that have fought for their lives against a lifetime of wind and weather, and brought forth their fruit against the storm. Uncle Ethan and his wife can talk out only their hard thoughts, and these only under stress; their softer impulses go unspoken. But no one reading of them here thinks of the Ripleys as hard or unloving. The realism that presents them is without satire; the old lady's outbreak is set down by one who understands.

MRS. RIPLEY'S TRIP

From *Main-Travelled Roads*

The night was in windy November, and the blast, threatening rain, roared around the poor little shanty of "Uncle Ripley," set like a chicken-trap on the vast Iowa prairie. Uncle Ethan was mending his old violin, with many York State "dums!" and "I gol darns!" totally oblivious of his tireless old wife, who, having "finished the supper-dishes," sat knitting a stocking evidently for the little grandson who lay before the stove like a cat. Neither of the old people wore glasses, and their light was a tallow candle; they couldn't afford "none o' them new-fangled lamps." The room was small, the chairs wooden, and the walls bare—a home where poverty was a never-absent guest. The old lady looked pathetically little, weazened and hopeless in her ill-fitting garments (whose original color had long since vanished), intent as she was on the stocking in her knotted, stiffened fingers, but there was a peculiar sparkle in her little black eyes, and an unusual resolution in the straight lines of her withered and shapeless lips. Suddenly she paused, stuck a needle in the spare knob of hair at the back of her head, and, looking at Ripley, said decisively: "Ethan Ripley, you'll haff to do your own cooking from now on to New Year's; I'm goin' back to Yaark State."

The old man's leather-brown face stiffened into a look of quizzical surprise for a moment; then he cackled, incredulously: "Ho! Ho! har! Sho! be y', now? I want to know if y' be."

"Well, you'll find out."

"Goin' to start to-morrow, mother?"

"No, sir, I ain't; but I am on Thursday. I want to get to Sally's by Sunday, sure, an' to Silas's on Thanksgivin'."

There was a note in the old woman's voice that brought genuine stupefaction into the face of Uncle Ripley. Of course in this case, as in all others, the money consideration was uppermost.

"Howgy 'spect to get the money, mother? Anybody died an' left yeh a pile?"

"Never you mind where I get the money so's't *you* don't haff to bear it. The land knows, if I'd a-waited for *you* to pay my way—"

"You needn't twit me of bein' poor, old woman," said Ripley, flaming up after the manner of many old people. "I've done *my* part t' get along. I've worked day in and day out—"

"Oh! *I* ain't done no work, have I?" snapped she, laying down the stocking and levelling a needle at him, and putting a frightful emphasis on "I."

"I didn't say you hadn't done no work."

"Yes, you did!"

"I didn't, neither. I said—"

"I *know* what you said."

"I said I'd done *my part!*" roared the husband, dominating her as usual by superior lung power. "I didn't *say* you hadn't done your part," he added, with an unfortunate touch of emphasis on "say."

"I know y' didn't *say* it, but y' meant it. I don't know what y' call doin' my part, Ethan Ripley; but if cookin' for a drove of harvest hands and thrashin' hands, takin' care o' the eggs and butter, 'n' diggin' taters an' milkin', ain't *my* part, I don't never expect to do my part, 'n' you might as well know it fust 's last. I'm sixty years old," she went on, with a little break in her harsh voice, dominating him now by woman's logic, "an' I've never had a day to myself, not even Fourth of July. If I've went a-visitin' 'r to a picnic, I've had to come home an' milk 'n' get supper for you men-folks. I ain't been away t' stay overnight for thirteen years in this house, 'n' it was just so in Davis County for ten more. For twenty-three years, Ethan Ripley, I've stuck right to the stove an' churn without a day or a night off." Her voice choked again, but she rallied, and continued impressively, "And now I'm a-goin' back to Yaark State."

Ethan was vanquished. He stared at her in speechless surprise, his jaw hanging. It was incredible.

"For twenty-three years," she went on, musingly, "I've just about promised myself every year I'd go back an' see my folks." She was distinctly talking to herself now, and her voice had a touching, wistful cadence. "I've wanted to go back an' see the old folks, an' the

hills where we played, an' eat apples off the old tree down by the old well. I've had them trees an' hills in my mind days and days—nights too—an' the girls I used to know, an' my own folks—"

She fell into a silent muse, which lasted so long that the ticking of the clock grew loud as a gong in the man's ears, and the wind outside seemed to sound drearier than usual. He returned to the money problem, kindly, though.

"But how y' goin' t' raise the money? I ain't got no extra cash this time. Agin Roach is paid an' the mortgage interest paid we ain't got no hundred dollars to spare, Jane, not by a jugful."

"Waal, don't you lay awake nights studyin' on where I'm a-goin' to get the money," said the old woman, taking delight in mystifying him. She had him now, and he couldn't escape. He strove to show his indifference, however, by playing a tune or two on the violin.

"Come, Tukey, you better climb the wooden hill," Mrs. Ripley said, a half-hour later, to the little chap on the floor, who was beginning to get drowsy under the influence of his grandpa's fiddling. "Pa, you had orta 'a put that string in the clock to-day—on the 'larm side the string is broke," she said, upon returning from the boy's bedroom. "I orta get up extra early to-morrow, to get some sewin' done. Land knows, I can't fix up much, but they is a leetle I c'n do. I want to look decent."

They were alone now, and they both sat expectantly.

"You 'pear to think, mother, that I'm agin yer goin'."

"Waal, it would kinder seem as if y' hadn't hustled yerself any t' help me git off."

He was smarting under the sense of being wronged. "Wa'al, I'm jest as willin' you should go as I am for myself; but if I ain't got no money I don't see how I'm goin' to send—"

"I don' want ye to send; nobody ast ye to, Ethan Ripley. I guess if I had what I've earnt since we came on this farm I'd have enough to go to Jericho with."

"You've got as much out of it as I have. You talk about your goin' back. Ain't I been wantin' to go back myself? And ain't I kep' still 'cause I see it wa'n't no use? I guess I've worked jest as long an' as hard as you, an' in storms an' wind an' heat, ef it comes t' that."

The woman was staggered, but she wouldn't give up; she must get in one more thrust.

"Wa'al, if you'd'a managed as well as I have, you'd have some money to go with." And she rose, and went to mix her bread, and set it "raisin'." He sat by the fire twanging his fiddle softly. He was plainly thrown into gloomy retrospection, something quite unusual for him. But his fingers picking out the bars of a familiar tune set him to smiling, and whipping his bow across the strings, he forgot all about his wife's resolutions and his own hardships. Trouble always slid off his back like "punkins off a haystack" anyway.

The old man still sat fiddling softly after his wife

disappeared in the hot and stuffy little bedroom off the kitchen. His shaggy head bent lower over his violin. He heard her shoes drop—*one, two*. Pretty soon she called.

"Come, put up that squeakin' old fiddle, and go to bed. Seems as if you orta have sense enough not to set there keepin' everybody in the house awake."

"You hush up," retorted he. "I'll come when I git ready, not till. I'll be glad when you're gone—"

"Yes, I warrant *that*."

With which amiable good-night they went off to sleep, or at least she did, while he lay awake, pondering on "where under the sun she was goin' t' raise that money."

The next day she was up bright and early, working away on her own affairs, ignoring Ripley totally, the fixed look of resolution still on her little old wrinkled face. She killed a hen and dressed and baked it. She fixed up a pan of doughnuts and made a cake. She was engaged on the doughnuts when a neighbor came in, one of those women who take it as a personal affront when any one in the neighborhood does anything without asking their advice. She was fat, and could talk a man blind in three minutes by the watch.

"What's this I hear, Mis' Ripley?"

"I dun know. I expect you hear about all they is goin' on in this neighborhood," replied Mrs. Ripley, with crushing bluntness; but the gossip did not flinch.

"Well, Sett Turner told *me* that her husband told *her* that Ripley told *him* that you was goin' back East on a visit."

"Waal, what of it?"

"Well, air yeh?"

"The Lord willin' an' the weather permittin', I expect to be."

"Good land, I want to know! Well, well! I never was so astonished in my life. I said, ses I, 'It can't be.' 'Well,' ses 'e, 'tha's what *she* told me,' ses 'e. 'But,' ses I, 'she is the last woman in the world to go gallivantin' off East,' ses I. An' ses he, 'But it comes from good authority,' ses he. 'Well, then, it must be so,' ses I. But, land sakes! do tell me all about it. How come you to make up your mind? All these years you've been kind a-talkin' it over, an' now y'r actshelly goin'—Waal, *I never!* 'I 'spose Ripley furnishes the money,' ses I to him. 'Well, no,' ses 'e. 'Ripley says he'll be blowed if he sees where the money's comin' from,' ses 'e; and ses I, 'But maybe she's jest jokin',' ses I. 'Not much,' he says. S'e: 'Ripley believes she's goin' fast enough. He's just as anxious to find out as we be—' "

Here Mrs. Doudney paused for breath; she had walked so fast and had rested so little that her interminable flood of "ses I's" and "ses he's" ceased necessarily. She had reached, moreover, the point of most vital interest—the money.

"An' you'll find out jest 'bout as soon as he does,"

was the dry response from the figure hovering over the stove, and with all her manoeuvring that was all she got.

All day Ripley went about his work exceedingly thoughtful for him. It was cold, blustering weather. The wind rustled among the cornstalks with a wild and mournful sound, the geese and ducks went sprawling down the wind, and horses' coats were ruffled and backs raised.

The old man was husking corn alone in the field, his spare form rigged out in two or three ragged coats, his hands inserted in a pair of gloves minus nearly all the fingers, his thumbs done up in "stalls," and his feet thrust into huge coarse boots. During the middle of the day the frozen ground thawed, and the mud stuck to his boots, and the "down ears" wet and chapped his hands, already worn to the quick. Toward night it grew cold and threatened snow. In spite of all these attacks he kept his cheerfulness and, though he was very tired, he was softened in temper.

Having plenty of time to think matters over, he had come to the conclusion "that the old woman needed a play-spell. I ain't likely to be no richer next year than I am this one; if I wait till I'm able to send her she won't never go. I calc'late I c'n git enough out o' them shoats to send her. I'd kind a'lotted on eat'n' them pigs done up into sassengers, but if the ol' woman goes East, Tukey an' me'll kind a haff to pull through without 'em. We'll have a turkey f'r Thanksgivin' an' a

chicken once'n a while. Lord! but we'll miss the gravy on the flap-jacks. A-men!" (He smacked his lips over the thought of the lost dainty.) "But let 'er rip! We can stand it. Then there is my buffalo overcoat. I'd kind a calc'lated on havin' a buffalo—but that's gone up the spout along with them sassengers."

These heroic sacrifices having been determined upon, he put them into effect at once.

This he was able to do, for his corn-rows ran alongside the road leading to Cedarville, and his neighbors were passing almost all hours of the day.

It would have softened Jane Ripley's heart could she have seen his bent and stiffened form amid the corn-rows, the cold wind piercing to the bone through his threadbare and insufficient clothing. The rising wind sent the snow rattling among the moaning stalks at intervals. The cold made his poor dim eyes water, and he had to stop now and then to swing his arms about his chest to warm them. His voice was hoarse with shouting at the shivering team.

That night as Mrs. Ripley was clearing the dishes away, she got to thinking about the departure of the next day, and she began to soften. She gave way to a few tears when little Tewksbury Gilchrist, her grandson, came up and stood beside her.

"Gran'ma, you ain't goin' to stay away always, are yeh?"

"Why, course not, Tukey. What made y' think that?"

"Well, y' ain't told us nawthin' 'tall about it. An' yeh kind o' look 's if yeh was mad."

"Well, I ain't mad; I'm jest a-thinkin', Tukey. Y' see I come away from them hills when I was a little girl a'most; before I married y'r grandad. And I ain't never been back. 'Most all my folks is there, sonny, an' we've been s' poor all these years I couldn't seem t' never get started. Now, when I'm 'most ready t' go, I feel kind a queer—'sif I'd cry."

And cry she did, while little Tewksbury stood patting her trembling hands. Hearing Ripley's step on the porch, she rose hastily, and drying her eyes, plunged at the work again. Ripley came in with a big armful of wood, which he rolled into the woodbox with a thundering crash. Then he pulled off his mittens, slapped them together to knock off the ice and snow, and laid them side by side under the stove. He then removed cap, coat, blouse and boots, which last he laid upon the woodbox, the soles turned toward the stove-pipe.

As he sat down without speaking, he opened the front doors of the stove, and held the palms of his stiffened hands to the blaze. The light brought out a thoughtful look on his large, uncouth, yet kindly visage. Life had laid hard lines on his brown skin, but it had not entirely soured a naturally kind and simple nature. It had made him penurious and dull and iron-muscled; had stifled all the slender flowers of his nature; yet there was warm soil somewhere hid in his heart.

"It's snowin' like all p'sessed," he remarked, finally.

"I guess we'll have a sleigh-ride to-morrow. I calc'late t' drive y' daown in scrumptious style. If yeh must leave, why, we'll give yeh a whoopin' old send-off, won't we, Tukey?

"I ben a-thinkin' things over kind o' t' day, mother, an' I've come t' the conclusion that we *have* been kind a hard on yeh, without knowin' it, y' see. Y' see I'm kind a easy-goin', an' little Tuke he's only a child, an' we ain't c'nsidered how you felt."

She didn't appear to be listening, but she was, and he didn't appear, on his part, to be talking to her, and he kept his voice as hard and as dry as he could.

"An' I was tellin' Tukey t' day that it was a dum shame our crops hadn't turned out better. An' when I saw ol' Hatfield go by I hailed him, an' asked him what he'd gimme fer two o' m' shoats. Waal, the upshot is, I sent t' town for some things I calc'lated ye'd need. An' here's a ticket to Georgetown, and ten dollars. Why, ma, what's up?"

Mrs. Ripley broke down, and with her hands all wet with dishwater, as they were, covered her face and sobbed. She felt like kissing him, but she didn't. Tewksbury began to whimper too; but the old man was astonished. His wife had not wept for years (before him). He rose and walked clumsily up to her and timidly touching her hair—

"Why, mother! What's the matter? What 'v' I done now? I was calc'latin' to sell them pigs anyway. Hatfield jest advanced the money on 'em."

She hopped up and dashed into the bedroom, and in a few minutes returned with a yarn mitten, tied around the wrist, which she laid on the table with a thump, saying: "I don't want yer money. There's money enough to take me where I want to go."

"Whee-ew! Thunder and gimpsum root! Where'd ye git that? Didn't dig it out of a hole?"

"No, I jest saved it—a dime at a time—see?" Here she turned it out on the table—some bills, but mostly silver dimes and quarters.

"Thunder and scissors! Must be two er three hundred dollars there," stared he.

"They's jest seventy-five dollars and thirty cents; jest about enough to go back on. Tickets is fifty-five dollars, goin' an' comin'. That leaves twenty dollars for other expenses, not countin' what I've already spent, which is six-fifty," said she, recovering her self-possession. "It's plenty."

"But y' ain't calc'lated on no sleepers nor hotel bills."

"I ain't goin' on no sleeper. Mis' Doudney says it's jest scandalous the way things is managed on them cars. I'm goin' on the old-fashioned cars, where they ain't no half-dressed men runnin' around."

"But *you* needn't be afraid of them, mother, at your age—"

"There! you needn't throw my age an' homeliness into my face, Ethan Ripley. If I hadn't waited an' tended on you so long, I'd look a little more's I did when I married yeh."

Ripley gave it up in despair. He didn't realize fully enough how the proposed trip had unsettled his wife's nerves. She didn't realize it herself.

"As for the hotel bills, they won't be none. I ain't a-goin' to pay them pirates as much for a day's board as we'd charge for a week's, an' have nawthin' to eat but dishes. I'm goin' to take a chicken an' some hard-boiled eggs, an' I'm goin' right through to Georgetown."

"Well, all right; but here's the ticket I got."

"I don't want yer ticket."

"But you've got to take it."

"Waal, I hain't."

"Why, yes, ye have. It's bought, an' they won't take it back."

"Won't they?" She was staggered again.

"Not much they won't. I ast 'em. A ticket sold is sold."

"Waal, if they won't—"

"You bet they won't."

"I s'pose I'll haff to use it"; and that ended it.

They were a familiar sight as they rode down the road toward town next day. As usual, Mrs. Ripley sat up straight and stiff as "a half-drove wedge in a white-oak log." The day was cold and raw. There was some snow on the ground, but not enough to warrant the use of sleighs. It was "Neither sleddin' nor wheelin'." The old people sat on a board laid across the box, and had an old quilt or two drawn up over their knees. Tewks-

bury lay in the back part of the box (which was filled with hay), where he jounced up and down, in company with a queer old trunk and a brand-new imitation-leather hand-bag. There is no ride quite so desolate and uncomfortable as a ride in a lumber wagon on a cold day in autumn, when the ground is frozen, and the wind is strong and raw with threatening snow. The wagon wheels grind along in the snow, the cold gets in under the seat at the calves of one's legs, and the ceaseless bumping of the bottom of the box on the feet is frightful.

There was not much talk on the way down, and what little there was related mainly to certain domestic regulations to be strictly followed, regarding churning, pickles, pancakes, etc. Mrs. Ripley wore a shawl over her head, and carried her queer little black bonnet in her hand. Tewksbury was also wrapped in a shawl. The boy's teeth were pounding together like castanets by the time they reached Cedarville, and every muscle ached with the fatigue of shaking. After a few purchases they drove down to the railway station, a frightful little den (common in the West), which was always too hot or too cold. It happened to be hot just now—a fact which rejoiced little Tewksbury.

"Now git my trunk *stamped* 'r *fixed*, 'r whatever they call it," she said to Ripley, in a commanding tone, which gave great delight to the inevitable crowd of loafers beginning to assemble. "Now remember, Tukey, have grandad kill that biggest turkey right before Thanks-

givin', an' then you run right over to Mis' Doudney's —she's got an awful tongue, but she can bake a turkey first-rate—an' she'll fix up some squash-pies for yeh. You can warm up one o' them mince-pies. I wish ye could be with me, but ye can't, so do the best ye can."

Ripley returning now, she said: "Waal, now, I've fixed things up the best I could. I've baked bread enough to last a week, an' Mis' Doudney has promised to bake for yeh."

"I don't like her bakin'."

"Waal, you'll haff to stand it till I get back, 'n' you'll find a jar o' sweet pickles an' some crabapple sauce down suller, n'n you'd better melt up brown sugar for 'lasses, 'n' for goodness' sake don't eat all them mince-pies up the fust week, 'n' see that Tukey ain't froze goin' to school. An' now you'd better get out for home. Good-bye, an' remember them pies."

As they were riding home, Ripley roused up after a long silence.

"Did she—a—kiss you good-bye, Tukey?"

"No, sir," piped Tewksbury.

"Thunder! didn't she?" After a silence. "She didn't me, neither. I guess she kind a sort a forgot it, bein' so flustrated, y' know."

One cold, windy, intensely bright day, Mrs. Stacey, who lives about two miles from Cedarville, looking out of the window, saw a queer little figure struggling along the road, which was blocked here and there with drifts.

It was an old woman laden with a good half-dozen parcels, any one of which was a load, which the wind seemed determined to wrench from her. She was dressed in black, with a full skirt, and her cloak being short, the wind had excellent opportunity to inflate her garments and sail her off occasionally into the deep snow outside the track, but she held on bravely till she reached the gate. As she turned in, Mrs. Stacey cried:

"Why! it's Gran'ma Ripley. just getting back from her trip. Why! how do you do? Come in. Why! you must be nearly frozen. Let me take off your hat and veil."

"No, thank ye kindly, but I can't stop. I must be gittin' back to Ripley. I expec' that man has jest let ev'rything go six ways f'r Sunday."

"Oh, you must sit down just a minute and warm."

"Waal, I will, but I've got to git home by sundown, sure. I don' suppose they's a thing in the house to eat."

"Oh dear! I wish Stacey was here, so he could take you home. An' the boys at school."

"Don't need any help, if 'twa'nt for these bundles an' things. I guess I'll jest leave some of 'em here, an' —Here! take one o' them apples. I brought 'em from Lizy Jane's suller, back to Yaark State."

"Oh! they're delicious! You must have had a lovely time."

"Pretty good. But I kep' thinkin' o' Ripley an' Tukey all the time. I s'pose they have had a gay time of it" (she meant the opposite of gay). "Waal, as I told Lizy

Jane, I've had my spree, an' now I've got to git back to work. They ain't no rest for such as we are. I told Lizy Jane them folks in the big houses have Thanksgivin' dinner every day uv their lives, and men an' women in splendid clo's to wait on 'em, so't Thanksgivin' don't mean anything to 'em; but we poor critters, we make a great to-do if we have a good dinner oncet a year. I've saw a pile o' this world, Mrs. Stacey —a pile of it! I didn't think they was so many big houses in the world as I saw b'tween here an' Chicago. Waal, I can't set here gabbin'; I must git home to Ripley. Jest kinder stow them bags away. I'll take two an' leave them three others. Good-by, I must be gittin' home to Ripley. He'll want his supper on time." And off up the road the indomitable little figure trudged, head held down to the cutting blast. Little snow-fly, a speck on a measureless expanse, crawling along with painful breathing and slipping, sliding steps—"Gittin' home to Ripley an' the boy."

Ripley was out to the barn when she entered, but Tewksbury was building a fire in the old cook-stove. He sprang up with a cry of joy, and ran to her. She seized him and kissed him, and it did her so much good she hugged him close, and kissed him again and again, crying hysterically.

"Oh, gran'ma, I'm so glad to see you! We've had an awful time since you've ben gone."

She released him and looked around. A lot of dirty dishes were on the table, the table-cloth was a "sight

to behold," and so was the stove—kettle-marks all over the table-cloth, splotches of pancake batter all over the stove.

"Waal, I sh'd say as much," she dryly vouchsafed, untying her bonnet strings.

When Ripley came in she had on her regimentals, the stove was brushed, the room swept, and she was elbow-deep in the dish-pan. "Hullo, mother! Got back, hev yeh?"

"I sh'd say it was about time," she replied briefly, without looking up or ceasing work. "Has ol' 'Crumpy' dried up yit?" This was her greeting.

Her trip was a fact now; no chance could rob her of it. She had looked forward twenty-three years toward it, and now she could look back at it accomplished. She took up her burden again, never more thinking to lay it down.

EDWARD EGGLESTON

(1837–1902)

As no reader of *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* could doubt that it was made from the substance of things seen, and as so many of these readers were too far away to have direct knowledge of the author's life—for the book was read everywhere in America, became widely popular in England and was translated into French, Dutch, Danish and German—he was kept busy all his days explaining that he was not the original of the orphan Shocky, and that his own home life had not been of the type described with such feeling in his first piece of fiction. He came of an old Virginia planter family. His grandfather had been a captain under Washington at Yorktown. His father, after graduating from William and Mary, went West to practice law; there he was elected to the Indiana State Senate and brought up his children in an atmosphere of *belles lettres*. When, about 1850, Edward Eggleston and his brother George spent a year in the absolutely pioneer home of their uncle, Daniel Lowry, it was as visitors only. But Daniel Lowry had come to Decatur County in 1818, and his farm still produced everything that the family ate, drank, or wore, except salt, coffee, tea, and, towards the end, an occasional calico dress. All these primitive conditions and customs the boys took in, as only boys can. When Edward

Eggleston, who had been on the staff of *The Independent*, became editor of *House and Home*, he wrote for it what was to have been but a three-part story based on his brother's experience at Riker's Ridge, undoubtedly reinforced by memories of the pioneer life in Decatur County, and called *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*. It was at once so successful that it grew by demand and was produced to keep up with the promised instalments; its popularity soon overflowed the limited circulation of the magazine, and in one form or another it has been selling ever since.

Eggleston had been a circuit-rider before he was nineteen; years later he was pastor of an independent, creedless church in Brooklyn, N. Y., "the dignified equivalent" of the "Church of the Best Licks," organized by Ralph Hardsook and Bud Means. He was the author of many books, several of them novels, of which *Roxy* and *The Faith Doctor* have the best claim to survival. The latter part of his life he spent abroad working on a history of the life in the United States, to be "the life of the people, the sources of their ideas and habits, the course of their development from beginnings." To this he gave twenty years, and largely because he would not take his facts secondhand and insisted on exploring the originals, he died leaving it scarce more than begun in *The Beginners of a Nation* and *The Transit of Civilization*. It is not too much to say that he was one of the forerunners of the present-day "truth-telling" school of American historians; like them, he was called iconoclastic because his aim was to find truth and reveal it.

This is clearly the aim of his best known novel, from which we have here its best known scene, the spelling-match. From the chapter in which it occurs only a few brief sentences have been omitted, as concerning characters that do not appear in this action. If the truth as Eggleston told it rankled somewhat

at the time, it was not long in finding acceptance even among the people of whom it was told. Jim Phillips, for instance, was an actual man, name and all, whom Eggleston had seen as a boy and had not seen for so long that he thought he must be dead. At first Phillips was "mad clean through" at finding himself "put into a book" by name, but when he found that he had been made famous as "the best speller in the world," he joyfully accepted the legend and added to it by selling as souvenirs bits of his flowered wedding-waistcoat, saying that it had been a gift from the author of the book.

George Cary Eggleston, speaking of the section in which the scene of this novel is laid, says: "If there was not much education to be secured, at any rate everybody there was determined to get all of it that could be had." All boys and girls attended, even before the schools became free; any man who could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three was equipped for the mastery of a school, if he had a determined will and a strong arm. One of the chapters of this novel concerns a "turn-out" such as Judge Longstreet describes in *Georgia Scenes*. A "loud" school, as opposed to a "still" school, was one where everybody studied out loud, that the teacher might be sure they were really studying.

An amusing after-effect of *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* was a revival of the spelling-school as a means of public entertainment. It spread over the English-speaking world as far as Australia, but it died down for lack of the conditions out of which the original institution arose. Eggleston believed that the excessive weight laid on spelling in the early forties was "an instinctive effort to repair a previous neglect." The original settlers of America were much better spellers than the second generation, who were too busy with subduing the wilderness; so the first settlers of the West, who for like reasons spelled badly, set to work to repair educational deficiencies in their

children and found those in spelling the most readily apparent. At any rate, this is a theory to be taken into account when the history of the widespread and long continued early-American enthusiasm for spelling schools comes to be written.

SPELLING DOWN THE MASTER

From *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*

"I 'low," said Mrs. Means, as she stuffed the tobacco into her cob pipe after supper on that eventful Wednesday evening: "I 'low they'll app'int the Squire to gin out the words to-night. They mos' always do, you see, kase he's the peartest old man in this deestrick: and I 'low some of the young fellers would have to git up and dust ef they would keep up with him. And he uses sech remarkable smart words. He speaks so polite, too. But laws! don't I remember when he was poarer nor Job's turkey? Twenty years ago, when he come to these 'ere diggings, that air Squire Hawkins was a poar Yankee school-master, and said 'pail' instid of bucket, and that called a cow a 'caow', and that couldn't tell to save his gizzard what we meant by *'low* and by *right smart.* But he's larnt our ways now, an' he's jest as civilized as the rest of us. You would-n know he'd ever been a Yankee. He didn't stay poar long. Not he. He jest married a right rich girl! He! he!" And the old woman grinned at Ralph, and then at Mirandy, and then at the rest, until Ralph shuddered. Nothing was so frightful to him as to be fawned on by this grinning ogre, whose few lonesome, blackish teeth seemed ready to devour him. "He didn't stay poar, you bet a hoss!" and

with this the coal was deposited on the pipe, and the lips began to crack like parchment as each puff of smoke escaped. "He married rich, you see," and here another significant look at the young master, and another fond look at Mirandy, as she puffed away reflectively. "His wife hadn't no book-larnin'. She'd been through the spellin' book wunst, and had got as fur as 'asperity' on it a second time. But she couldn't read a word when she was married, and never could. She warn't overly smart. She hadn't hardly got the sense the law allows. But schools was skase in them days, and, besides, book-larnin' don't do no good to a woman. Makes her stuck up. I never knowed but one gal in my life as had ciphered into fractions, and she was so dog-on stuck up that she turned up her nose one night at an apple-peelin' bekase I tuck a sheet off the bed to splice out the table-cloth, which was ruther short. And the sheet was mos' clean too. Had-n been slep on more'n wunst or twicet. But I was goin' fer to say that when Squire Hawkins married Virginny Gray he got a heap o' money, or, what's the same thing mostly, a heap o' good land. And that's better 'n book-larnin', says I. Ef a gal had gone clean through all eddication, and got to the rule of three itself, that would-n buy a featherbed. Squire Hawkins jest put eddication again the gal's farm, and traded even, an' ef ary one of 'em got swindled, I never heerd no complaints. . . .

[*They adjourn to the school-house.*]

Every family furnished a candle. There were yellow dips and white dips, burning, smoking and flaring. There was laughing, and talking and giggling, and simpering, and ogling, and flirting, and courting. What a full-dress party is to Fifth Avenue, a spelling-school is to Hoopole County. It is an occasion which is metaphorically inscribed with this legend: "Choose your partners." Spelling is only a blind in Hoopole County, as is dancing on Fifth Avenue. But as there are some in society who love dancing for its own sake, so in Flat Creek district there were those who loved spelling for its own sake, and who, smelling the battle from afar, had come to try their skill in this tournament, hoping to freshen the laurels they had won in their schooldays.

"I 'low," said Mr. Means, speaking as the principal school trustee, "I 'low our friend the Square is jest the man to boss this 'ere carnsarn to-night. Ef nobody objects, I'll app'int him. Come, Square, don't be bashful. Walk up to the trough, fodder or no fodder, as the man said to his donkey." . . .

[*The Squire takes his place and addresses the crowd. He has some New England idioms, "well overlaid by a Western pronunciation."*]

"I app'int Larkin Lanham and Jeems Buchanan fer captings," said the Squire. And the two young men thus named took a stick and tossed it from hand to hand to decide which should have the "first choice." One tossed the stick to the other, who held it fast, just where he

happened to catch it. Then the first placed his hand above the second, and so the hands were alternately changed to the top. The one who held the stick last without room for the other to take hold had gained the lot. This was tried three times. As Larkin held the stick twice out of three times, he had the choice. He hesitated a moment. Everybody looked toward tall Jim Phillips. But Larkin was fond of a venture on unknown seas, and so he said, "I'll take the master," while a buzz of surprise ran round the room, and the captain of the other side, as if afraid his opponent would withdraw his choice, retorted quickly, and with a little smack of exultation and defiance in his voice, "And *I* take Jeems Phillips."

And soon all present, except a few of the old folks, found themselves ranged in opposing hosts, the poor spellers lagging in, with what grace they could, at the foot of the two divisions. The Squire opened his spelling-book and began to give out the words to the two captains, who stood up and spelled against each other. It was not long until Larkin spelled "really" with one *l*, and had to sit down in confusion, while a murmur of satisfaction ran through the ranks of the opposing forces. His own side bit their lips. The slender figure of the young teacher took the place of the fallen leader, and the excitement made the house very quiet. Ralph dreaded the loss of prestige he would suffer if he should be easily spelled down.

. . . . . .

After ten minutes of spelling hard words Jeems Buchanan, the captain on the other side, spelled "atrocious" with an *s* instead of a *c*, and subsided, his first choice, Jeems Phillips, coming up against the teacher. This wrought the excitement to fever-heat. For though Ralph was chosen first, it was entirely on trust, and most of the company were disappointed. The champion who now stood up against the school-master was a famous speller.

Jim Phillips was a tall, lank, stoop-shouldered fellow who had never distinguished himself in any other pursuit than spelling. Except in this one art of spelling he was of no account. He could not catch well or bat well in ball. He could not throw well enough to make his mark in that famous Western game of bull-pen. He did not succeed well in any study but that of Webster's Elementary. But in that he was—to use the usual Flat Creek locution—in that he was "a hoss." This genius for spelling is in some people a sixth sense, a matter of intuition. Some spellers are born, and not made, and their facility reminds one of the mathematical prodigies that crop out every now and then to bewilder the world. Bud Means, foreseeing that Ralph would be pitted against Jim Phillips, had warned his friend that Jim could "spell like thunder and lightning," and that it "took a powerful smart speller" to beat him, for he knew "a heap of spelling-book." To have "spelled down the master" is next thing to having whipped the biggest bully in Hoopole County, and Jim

had "spelled down" the last three masters. He divided the hero-worship of the district with Bud Means.

For half an hour the Squire gave out hard words. What a blessed thing our crooked orthography is! Without it there could be no spelling-schools. As Ralph discovered his opponent's mettle, he became more and more cautious. He was now satisfied that Jim would eventually beat him. The fellow evidently knew more about the spelling-book than old Noah Webster himself. As he stood there, with his dull face and long sharp nose, his hands behind his back, and his voice spelling infallibly, it seemed to Hartsook that his superiority must lie in his nose. Ralph's cautiousness answered a double purpose; it enabled him to tread surely, and it was mistaken by Jim for weakness. Phillips was now confident that he should carry off the scalp of the fourth school-master before the evening was over. He spelled eagerly, confidently, brilliantly. Stoop-shouldered as he was, he began to straighten up. In the minds of all the company the odds were in his favor. He saw this, and became ambitious to distinguish himself by spelling without giving the matter any thought.

. . . . . .

As Ralph spelled in this dogged way for half an hour the hardest words the Squire could find, the excitement steadily rose in all parts of the house, and Ralph's friends even ventured to whisper that "maybe Jim had cotched his match, after all!"

But Phillips never doubted of his success.

"Theodolite," said the Squire.

"T-h-e, the, o-d, od, theod, o, theodo, *l-y-t-e*, theodolite," spelled the champion.

"Next," said the Squire, nearly losing his teeth in his excitement. Ralph spelled the word slowly and correctly, and the conquered champion sat down in confusion. The excitement was so great for some minutes that the spelling was suspended.

. . . . . .

It was now not so hard. The other spellers on the opposite side went down quickly under the hard words which the Squire gave out. The master had mowed down all but a few, his opponents had given up the battle, and all had lost their keen interest in a contest to which there could be but one conclusion, for there were only the poor spellers left. But Ralph Hartsook ran against a stump when he was least expecting it. It was the Squire's custom, when one of the smaller scholars or poorer spellers rose to spell against the master, to give out eight or ten easy words, that they might have some breathing-spell before being slaughtered, and then to give a poser or two which soon settled them. He let them run a little, as a cat does a doomed mouse. There was now but one person left on the opposite side, and, as she rose in her blue calico dress, Ralph recognized Hannah, the bound girl at old Jack Means's. She had not attended school in the district, and had never

spelled in spelling-school before, and was chosen last as an uncertain quantity. The Squire began with easy words of two syllables, from that page of Webster, so well known to all who ever thumbed it, as "baker," from the word that stands at the top of the page. She spelled these words in an absent and uninterested manner. As everybody knew that she would have to go down as soon as this preliminary skirmishing was over, everybody began to get ready to go home, and already there was the buzz of preparation. Young men were timidly asking girls if "they could see them safe home," which was the approved formula, and were trembling in mortal fear of "the mitten." Presently the Squire, thinking it time to close the contest, pulled his scalp forward, adjusted his glass eye, which had been examining his nose long enough, and turned over the leaves of the book to the great words at the place known to spellers as "incomprehensibility," and began to give out these "words of eight syllables with the accent on the sixth." Listless scholars now turned round, and ceased to whisper, in order to be in at the master's final triumph. But to their surprise "ole Miss Means's white nigger," as some of them called her in allusion to her slavish life, spelled these great words with as perfect ease as the master. Still not doubting the result, the Squire turned from place to place and selected all the hard words he could find. The school became utterly quiet, the excitement was too great for the ordinary buzz. Would "Meanses' Hanner" beat the master? beat the master that had laid

out Jim Phillips? Everybody's sympathy was now turned to Hannah. Ralph noticed that even Shocky had deserted him, and that his face grew brilliant every time Hannah spelled a word. In fact, Ralph deserted himself. As he saw the fine, timid face of the girl so long oppressed flush and shine with interest; as he looked at the rather low but broad and intelligent brow and the fresh, white complexion and saw the rich, womanly nature coming to the surface under the influence of applause and sympathy—he did not want to beat. If he had not felt that a victory given would insult her, he would have missed intentionally. The bulldog, the stern, relentless setting of the will, had gone, he knew not whither. And there had come in its place, as he looked in that face, a something which he did not understand. You did not, gentle reader, the first time it came to you.

The Squire was puzzled. He had given out all the hard words in the book. He again pulled the top of his head forward. Then he wiped his spectacles and put them on. Then out of the depths of his pocket he fished up a list of words just coming into use in those days—words not in the spelling-book. He regarded the paper attentively with his blue right eye. His black left eye meanwhile fixed itself in such a stare on Mirandy Means that she shuddered and hid her eyes in her red silk handkerchief.

"Daguerreotype," sniffed the Squire. It was Ralph's turn.

"D-a-u, dau—"

"Next."

And Hannah spelled it right.

Such a buzz followed that Betsey Short's giggle could not be heard, but Shocky shouted: "Hanner beat! my Hanner spelled down the master!" And Ralph went over and congratulated her. . . .

And then the Squire called them to order, and said; "As our friend Hanner Thompson is the only one left on her side, she will have to spell against nearly all on t'other side. I shall therefore take the liberty of procrastinating the completion of this interesting and exacting contest until to-morrow evening. I hope our friend Hanner may again carry off the cypress crown of glory. There is nothing better for us than healthful and kindly simulation."

ESTHER SHEPHARD

No such collection as this could do without a Paul Bunyan story, and of the various appearances of this gigantic folklore-hero in print, those under the auspices of Esther Shephard may be depended upon to give the reader the closest view. She has woven the Bunyan tall-stories—or at least a representative choice of them—into a connected narrative called *Paul Bunyan* (Harcourt) from which this chapter is taken; this makes, however, a complete short story in itself, and is indeed the one that Mrs. Shephard herself considers the best for this collection.

"The story is typical, I think," she writes, "and it has a long tradition behind it. In my researches in frontier literature I came across the story many times, told as a Kansas land story, a Dakota land story, a Salt Lake story, a Southern Railroad story, and many other ways. It is easy to see what the loggers contributed when they got hold of it. I never came across the story quite as complete as I have it in my book—I put together several versions—but from one logger I got it almost as complete as that. When I spoke to the English section of the National Education Association last summer on the backgrounds of Paul Bunyan, this was the story that I used to illustrate both the old world (i. e. Jack and the Beanstalk) and the later developments of the story, apparent to scholars, and the

sheer joyousness and swing of Paul Bunyan himself. Generally when I read this story I begin with the knocking down stumps for those who are not already familiar with Paul Bunyan, and when I do this of course I make over some of the transition sentences at the beginning of the chapter."

Mrs. Shephard was born in Minnesota and spent her childhood in Paul Bunyan's country, the north central and northern part of the state, where she knew logging life at first hand. She began collecting Paul Bunyan stories in 1920–21, when preparing her master's thesis on American frontier literature at the University of Washington; the next year, while teaching at Reed College, Portland, she collected Oregon stories; then she married C. Ellis Shephard and came back to Seattle. The pet name of their little boy is The Blue Ox. She is now completing a trilogy of plays, "The Gift of Signy," "Brother Kings" and "The Wife of Jonak," of which the first won a place in the Drama League contest of 1927.

The introduction to Esther Shephard's *Paul Bunyan* describes the processes by which the logger's hero, the "superlumberjack" Paul, and his Big Blue Ox Babe came into being and in time into literature. But the closing words of the book touch these reasons more nearly. The nameless narrator is telling of a young fellow who had been caught under a carload of logs and pinned there with his legs crushed, for two hours before the men could reach him:—

> "I bet all the while you was layin' here," one of 'em says to him afterwards, "you was wishin' mighty hard that some of us would hurry and come along and get this timber off of you."
>
> "No," he says. "That wasn't what I was wishin' at all. I wasn't worryin' about the timber none. What I was wishin' was that Paul Bunyan would come along with his old Blue Ox and hitch him onto this mountain and pull it

out from under me. That's what I was wishin' all the time."

And it's times like them, or when a tree is goin' to be falled that's so crooked no mortal can tell which way it'll go, or maybe a bragger comes to camp that thinks he knows more than the next fellow, and has to be took down a peg, or maybe when everythin' about the whole outfit goes haywire all at the same time, it's then that they remember Paul Bunyan and begin to talk about what he could do if he was there; and how he used to hew with that big ax of his, on the wove grass handle, and how he could twist the biggest tree around and make it fall where he wanted it to, and how in the old days he used to hitch Babe onto anythin' in sight, a whole section of timber even, and haul it down to the river ready for the Big Drive in the spring. And then they talk about North Dakota. For North Dakota, of course, was the biggest loggin' Paul ever done.

"*And then they talk about North Dakota . . .*" The breath of the Heroic Age is in the words.

PAUL BUNYAN'S CORNSTALK

From *Paul Bunyan*

~~Well, then~~ when Paul had logged all the trees off North Dakota and pounded all the stumps down and got the land all cleared and smooth, he thought he was done and finished with the job. But then this other letter from the king come. The king wrote over and wanted to know if the soil was fertile, and he said he wouldn't let the contract be called finished till Paul had proved that to his satisfaction. It wouldn't be no use to send his people over, he said, unless the soil was good, so's they could raise enough to eat and not have to starve to death or come back, which, like he'd said the other time, of course, he didn't want 'em to do.

And so Paul didn't hardly know what to do.

Course he himself knowed the soil was fertile—couldn't hardly help but be with a stand of timber on it like that—but how to prove that to the king, that was another kind of a job, and he was pretty considerably worried—~~for Paul, that is.~~ And what the king asked was reasonable enough too, Paul thought, even though it wasn't really in the contract, and he wanted to do it up right, a little more if anything rather than a little less, that was the way with Paul always. And so he had to figgur up something else to do about it.

Course he might of sent Ole over with a sample—he carried enough around on his shoes generally—and let the king try it, but then Ole was needed right where he was. Babe might need shoein' for one thing, and Ole was the only man in camp that could shoe him, and then besides there was Teeny—Paul didn't want him to get away from Teeny just then. Paul was tryin' to get Ole for a son-in-law, because Ole was about the best man he had, and he figgured if he could get him in the family that way he could always be sure of him and wouldn't have to raise his wages none to keep him. And so he didn't care to send him to a foreign country just then, where there might be pretty Swede girls around; but he had to think up some other way, if he could.

Well, what he finally figgured out was, he'd get some people to swear to affidavits for him. He'd plant something and then they'd watch it grow and swear to how far it growed the first day, and how far the second day, and how far the third day, and so on, all legal, and then they'd send the papers and the measurements to the king, and that ought to satisfy him.

So then when he'd got this all planned out and ready, Paul took a kernel of corn and went out and planted it.

Well, Paul, like I said, knowed that the soil there was fertile, but not even he had any good idea of how fertile it was. And he hadn't no more'n turned around to go back to the camp to get Ole and the other men that was goin' to watch it, till that corn was up out of the

ground and higher'n his knee already—and Paul'd planted it a good four foot deep in the hole he'd made with his little finger. And when him and Ole and Charley Nordstrom come runnin' out there it'd grew clean out of sight so you couldn't see the top at all no more.

Paul sent Ole up right away to cut the top off so it wouldn't grow no higher but it wasn't but a minute till Ole was pretty near clean out of sight too.

"Cut the top off so it'll branch out!" Paul yells up to where he thought Ole ought to be by that time. "Hurry up. Be quick."

"Can't do it, Paul!" Ole yells back. "Top no bin har. He grows so fast I cannint see him."

And Paul knowed it wasn't no use, for pretty soon they couldn't hardly see Ole no more, and Paul yells:

"Come on down then, Ole. Come on down!"

But Ole couldn't do that neither, because every foot he'd try to slide down, the cornstalk would carry him up three, it was growin' so fast, and so he kept goin' up and up all the time—good-bye, Ole—and he would of starved to death if Paul hadn't of got his gun and shot him up some doughnuts and biscuits after awhile.

And then Paul got his ax and tried to chop it down but he couldn't do that neither, because he couldn't never chop twice in the same place, the cornstalk was growin' so fast, and so he seen that wouldn't do.

Charley skooted back to camp and got two of the sawyers to come out and bring a saw and a couple of springboards—that was the first time springboards was

used in the woods—but they couldn't do it with that neither. They got the springboards in all right, but by the time they got ready to get up on 'em they was too high, and they'd forgot to bring the top air extensions to their ladders, so that was no good.

And Paul was sure what you'd call up a tree, only it wasn't him that was up the tree but Ole, and that's what made Paul feel the worst. Teeny would take on pretty hard if she heard how Ole was goin' out of sight. Course he could comfort her with that he was goin' in the right direction anyway, but that wouldn't do her much good, for she'd rather have him on earth. And then besides there was his future loggin' operations to take into consideration, for Ole he pretty near had to have for his loggin'. I think Paul dropped a tear out of the corner of one eye just about then, but it fell near the foot of the cornstalk and only made it grow faster.

So then Paul thought he maybe might get the Blue Ox and try to pull the corn out by the roots, but he remembered he'd have to put the chain around the stem and it might grow tight to the stem, and then when Babe'd begin to pull it might carry him up with it, and he'd lose his Ox too, besides his blacksmith and may be son-in-law. And so then he didn't hardly know what to do.

And just about that time one of them government inspectors happened to come along.

"This your cornstalk?" he says to Paul.

"Well, I planted it," Paul says.

"You planted it. Well, then."

"I planted it," says Paul, "but I didn't make it grow."

"No matter," says the inspector. "It's your cornstalk. You will have to remove it."

"Uh, huh," grunted Paul.

"Law of Public Nuisances," explains the inspector. "This cornstalk of yourn is found to be a Public Nuisance. Agricultural farmers in lower Illinois and Iowa complains of shortage of water for their crops. Something, they say, is sucking away the water from under the soil and leaving their wheat crops high and dry. Not only that, but steamboat men on the Mississippi reports that the river has lowered six foot in the last six hours—"

"Well, I'll be darned," says Paul.

"Furthermore," says the inspector, puttin' on a legal way, like they do, "it is my duty to inform you that your cornstalk has to be cut down. For investigation has proved that it is that same cornstalk that is causing the disturbance complained of."

"Yah!" Kind of snappily from Paul.

"And the said owner of the said cornstalk is therefore directed to chop it down."

But at that Paul gets mad.

"That's what I been tryin' to do for the last six hours, you fool," he says. "Can't you see nothin'?"

"Law of Public Nuisances," keeps on the inspector. "I being the lawfully constituted—"

But he didn't get no further, for by the time he got that big mouthful out of his mouth he was flyin' out over the edge of the field at the end of Paul's shoe. And Paul turns back to the cornstalk again.

"I got an idea," he says after a minute, after he'd been lookin' around for a little while.

What he done was, the Great Northern had been layin' a railroad through there not so very far away, and Paul got some of them railroad rails Jim Hill had left, and that's what he done it with. There was a big pile of them steel rails layin' there alongside the right-of-way and Paul just picks up a handful of 'em and brings 'em over to the cornstalk. He ties 'em all together in a long string and then with the help of the Blue Ox, that Charley had fetched, he swings 'em round the trunk of the corn and ties 'em in a knot.

With that, naturally, the corn begins to cut into itself, and it wasn't long before, growin' so fast, it'd cut itself clean through. With that steel rope around its neck, that cornstalk just naturally committed suicide, that's what it done.

And when it finally fell it took three days fallin', and made such a wind that the Mississippi valley's been full of windstorms and cyclones ever since.

Paul grubbed out the main part of the stump and you can see the hole standin' up three thousand feet in

the air to this day. One of the ears of corn that was pretty near ripe struck into the ground when it fell down and they burnt out the cob afterwards and had a well two hundred foot down lined on all sides with roasted corn, just like they got a corn beef mine somewheres over in Montana too, that maybe you've heard of.

Well, Ole, when he seen the cornstalk was beginnin' to fall, climbed out on one of the blades and when he was pretty near the ground he just swung himself down like little boys swing down on saplings and naturally he wasn't hurt at all.

He told Teeny afterwards she needn't to of worried none about his goin' clean through the sky and not bein' able to get back, because he had good suspenders on and they would of kept him from goin' clean through to the other side.

And the affidavits, and the King of Sweden. Well, Paul didn't get no affidavits, because nobody'd had time to take down any measurements, and there wasn't none that could be took down anyway, but a reporter on a Kansas paper wrote up the story, and Paul sent the clipping from the paper to the king. The Swede king believed the newspaper story all right because it was in print, you know, and so he sent all the money that was comin' to Paul, and then he sent his Swedes to North Dakota and there's where they are yet, a lot of 'em.

MARY HUNTER AUSTIN

Were I required to name but one writer in whose work the mystic aspects of my country find expression, it would be Mary Austin. The strange beauty of the desert speaks through her, and through her the song of the Indian enters our poetry; the "American rhythm" is in more than the title of one of her books. She is concerned less with America's past, or with its future, than with its immortality.

In 1903 Mary Austin wrote, out of her life in the Southwest, *The Land of Little Rain.* Since then she has fortified the position thus gained in our letters, by a long line of novels, plays, poems, and contributions to ethnology, history and general literature. *Lost Borders* appeared in 1909. This unhurried, absorbing tale of friendship between man and his little brother the beast, which has been chosen for this collection, could stand not only for the passing of the antelope, but for the lost creatures of the wild that once were here, before our coming.

THE LAST ANTELOPE

From *Lost Borders*

THERE were seven notches in the juniper by the Lone Tree Spring for the seven seasons that Little Pete had summered there, feeding his flocks in the hollows of the Ceriso. The first time of coming he had struck his axe into the trunk, meaning to make firewood, but thought better of it, and thereafter chipped it in sheer friendliness, as one claps an old acquaintance, for by the time the flock has worked up the treeless windy stretch from the Little Antelope to the Ceriso, even a lone juniper has a friendly look. And Little Pete was a friendly man, though shy of demeanor, so that with the best will in the world for wagging his tongue, he could scarcely pass the time of day with good countenance; the soul of a jolly companion with the front and bearing of one of his own sheep.

He loved his dogs as brothers; he was near akin to the wild things; he communed with the huddled hills, and held intercourse with the stars, saying things to them in his heart that his tongue stumbled over and refused. He knew his sheep by name, and had respect to signs and seasons; his lips moved softly as he walked, making no sound. Well—what would you? a man must have fellowship in some sort.

Whoso goes a-shepherding in the desert hills comes to be at one with his companions, growing brutish or converting them. Little Pete humanized his sheep. He perceived lovable qualities in them, and differentiated the natures and dispositions of inanimate things.

Not much of this presented itself on slight acquaintance, for, in fact, he looked to be of rather less account than his own dogs. He was undersized and hairy, and had a roving eye; probably he washed once a year at the shearing as the sheep were washed. About his body he wore a twist of sheepskin with the wool outward, holding in place the tatters of his clothing. On hot days when he wreathed leaves about his head, and wove him a pent of twigs among the scrub in the middle of his flock, he looked a faun or some wood creature come out of pagan times, though no pagan, as was clearly shown by the medal of the Sacred Heart that hung on his hairy chest, worn open to all weathers. Where he went about sheep-camps and shearings there were sly laughter and tapping of foreheads, but those who kept the tale of his flocks spoke well of him and increased his wage.

Little Pete kept to the same round year by year, breaking away from La Liebre after the spring shearing, south around the foot of Piños, swinging out to the desert in the wake of the quick, strong rains, thence to Little Antelope in July to drink a bottle for *La Quatorze*, and so to the Ceriso by the time the poppy fires were burned quite out and the quail trooped at noon

about the tepid pools. The Ceriso is not properly mesa nor valley, but a long-healed crater miles wide, rimmed about with the ragged edge of the old cone.

It rises steeply from the tilted mesa, overlooked by Black Mountain, darkly red as the red cattle that graze among the honey-colored hills. These are blunt and rounded, tumbling all down from the great crater and the mesa edge toward the long, dim valley of Little Antelope. Its outward slope is confused with the outlines of the hills, tumuli of blind cones, and the old lava flow that breaks away from it by the west gap and the ravine of the spring; within, its walls are deeply guttered by the torrent of winter rains.

In its cup-like hollow, the sink of its waters, salt and bitter as all pools without an outlet, waxes and wanes within a wide margin of bleaching reeds. Nothing taller shows in all the Ceriso, and the wind among them fills all the hollow with an eerie whispering. One spring rills down by the gorge of an old flow on the side toward Little Antelope, and, but for the lone juniper that stood by it, there is never a tree until you come to the foot of Black Mountain.

The flock of Little Pete, a maverick strayed from some rodeo, a prospector going up to Black Mountain, and a solitary antelope were all that passed through the Ceriso at any time. The antelope had the best right. He came as of old habit; he had come when the light-foot herds ranged from here to the sweet, mist-watered cañons of the Coast Range, and the bucks went up to

the windy mesas what time the young ran with their mothers, nose to flank. They had ceased before the keen edge of slaughter that defines the frontier of men.

All that a tardy law had saved to the district of Little Antelope was the buck that came up the ravine of the Lone Tree Spring at the set time of the year when Little Pete fed his flock in the Ceriso, and Pete averred that they were glad to see each other. True enough, they were each the friendliest thing the other found there; for though the law ran as far as the antelope ranged, there were hill-dwellers who took no account of it—namely, the coyotes. They hunted the buck in season and out, bayed him down from the feeding-grounds, fended him from the pool, pursued him by relay races, ambushed him in the pitfalls of the black rock.

There were seven coyotes ranging the east side of the Ceriso at the time when Little Pete first struck his axe into the juniper-tree, slinking, sly-footed, and evil-eyed. Many an evening the shepherd watched them running lightly in the hollow of the crater, the flash-flash of the antelope's white rump signalling the progress of the chase. But always the buck outran or outwitted them, taking to the high, broken ridges where no split foot could follow his seven-leagued bounds. Many a morning Little Pete, tending his cooking-pot by a quavering sage-brush fire, saw the antelope feeding down toward the Lone Tree Spring, and looked his sentiments. The coyotes had spoken theirs all in the night with derisive voices; never was there any love lost between a shep-

herd and a coyote. The pronghorn's chief recommendation to an acquaintance was that he could outdo them.

After the third summer, Pete began to perceive a reciprocal friendliness in the antelope. Early mornings the shepherd saw him rising from his lair, or came often upon the warm pressed hollow where he had lain within cry of his coyote-scaring fire. When it was midday in the misty hollow and the shadows drawn close, stuck tight under the juniper and the sage, they went each to his nooning in his own fashion, but in the half light they drew near together.

Since the beginning of the law the antelope had half forgotten his fear of man. He looked upon the shepherd with steadfastness, he smelled the smell of his garments which was the smell of sheep and the unhandled earth, and the smell of wood smoke was in his hair. They had companionship without speech; they conferred favors silently after the manner of those who understand one another. The antelope led to the best feeding-grounds, and Pete kept the sheep from muddying the spring until the buck had drunk. When the coyotes skulked in the scrub by night to deride him, the shepherd mocked them in their own tongue, and promised them the best of his lambs for the killing; but to hear afar off their hunting howl stirred him out of sleep to curse with great heartiness. At such times he thought of the antelope and wished him well.

Beginning with the west gap opposite the Lone Tree Spring about the 1st of August, Pete would feed all

around the broken rim of the crater, up the gullies and down, and clean through the hollow of it in a matter of two months, or if the winter had been a wet one, a little longer, and in seven years the man and the antelope grew to know each other very well. Where the flock fed the buck fed, keeping farthest from the dogs, and at last he came to lie down with it.

That was after a season of scant rains, when the feed was poor and the antelope's flank grew thin; the rabbits had trooped down to the irrigated lands, and the coyotes, made more keen by hunger, pressed him hard. One of those smoky, yawning days when the sky hugged the earth, and all sound fell back from a woolly atmosphere and broke dully in the scrub, about the usual hour of their running between twilight and mid-afternoon, the coyotes drove the tall buck, winded, desperate, and foredone, to refuge among the silly sheep, where for fear of the dogs and the man the howlers dared not come. He stood at bay there, fronting the shepherd, brought up against a crisis greatly needing the help of speech.

Well—he had nearly as much gift in that matter as Little Pete. Those two silent ones understood each other; some assurance, the warrant of a free-given faith, passed between them. The buck lowered his head and eased the sharp throbbing of his ribs; the dogs drew in the scattered flocks; they moved, keeping a little cleared space nearest the buck; he moved with them; he began to feed. Thereafter the heart of Little Pete

warmed toward the antelope, and the coyotes began to be very personal in their abuse. That same night they drew off the shepherd's dogs by a ruse and stole two of his lambs.

The same seasons that made the friendliness of the antelope and Little Pete wore the face of the shepherd into a keener likeness to the weathered hills, and the juniper flourishing greenly by the spring bade fair to outlast them both. The line of ploughed lands stretched out mile by mile from the lower valley, and a solitary homesteader built him a cabin at the foot of the Ceriso.

In seven years a coyote may learn somewhat; those of the Ceriso learned the ways of little Pete and the antelope. Trust them to have noted, as the years moved, that the buck's flanks were lean and his step less free. Put it that the antelope was old, and that he made truce with the shepherd to hide the failing of his powers; then if he came earlier or stayed later than the flock, it would go hard with him. But as if he knew their mind in the matter, the antelope delayed his coming until the salt pool shrunk to its innermost ring of reeds, and the sun-cured grasses crisped along the slope. It seemed the brute sense waked between him and the man to make each aware of the other's nearness. Often as Little Pete drove in by the west gap he would sight the prongs of the buck rising over the barrier of black rocks at the head of the ravine. Together they passed out of the crater, keeping fellowship as far as the frontier of evergreen oaks. Here Little Pete turned in by the cattle

fences to come at La Liebre from the north, and the antelope, avoiding all man-trails, growing daily more remote, passed into the wooded hills on unguessed errands of his own.

Twice the homesteader saw the antelope go up to the Ceriso at that set time of the year. The third summer when he sighted him, a whitish speck moving steadily against the fawn-colored background of the hills, the homesteader took down his rifle and made haste into the crater. At that time his cabin stood on the remotest edge of settlement, and the grip of the law was loosened in so long a reach.

"In the end the coyotes will get him. Better that he fall to me," said the homesteader. But, in fact, he was prompted by the love of mastery, which for the most part moves men into new lands, whose creatures they conceive given over into their hands.

The coyote that kept the watch at the head of the ravine saw him come, and lifted up his voice in the long-drawn dolorous whine that warned the other watchers in their unseen stations in the scrub. The homesteader heard also, and let a curse softly under his breath, for besides that they might scare his quarry, he coveted the howler's ears, in which the law upheld him. Never a tip nor a tail of one showed above the sage when he had come up into the Ceriso.

The afternoon wore on; the homesteader hid in the reeds, and the coyotes had forgotten him. Away to the left in a windless blur of dust the sheep of Little Pete

trailed up toward the crater's rim. The leader, watching by the spring, caught a jack-rabbit and was eating it quietly behind the black rock.

In the mean time the last antelope came lightly and securely by the gully, by the black rock and the lone juniper, into the Ceriso. The friendliness of the antelope for Little Pete betrayed him. He came with some sense of home, expecting the flock and protection of man-presence. He strayed witlessly into the open, his ears set to catch the jangle of the bells. What he heard was the snick of the breech-bolt as the homesteader threw up the sight of his rifle, and a small demoniac cry that ran from gutter to gutter of the crater rim, impossible to gauge for numbers or distance.

At that moment Little Pete worried the flock up the outward slope where the ruin of the old lava flows gave sharply back the wrangle of the bells. Three weeks he had won up from the Little Antelope, and three by way of the Sand Flat, where there was great scarcity of water, and in all that time none of his kind had hailed him. His heart warmed toward the juniper-tree and the antelope whose hoof-prints he found in the white dust of the mesa trail. Men had small respect by Little Pete, women he had no time for: the antelope was the noblest thing he had ever loved. The sheep poured through the gap and spread fanwise down the gully; behind them Little Pete twirled his staff, and made merry wordless noises in his throat in anticipation of friendliness. "Ehu!" he cried when he heard the hunt-

ing howl, "but they are at their tricks again," and then in English he voiced a volley of broken, inconsequential oaths, for he saw what the howlers were about.

One imputes a sixth sense to that son of a thief misnamed the coyote, to make up for speech—persuasion, concerted movement—in short, the human faculty. How else do they manage the terrible relay races by which they make quarry of the fleetest-footed? It was so they plotted the antelope's last running in the Ceriso: two to start the chase from the black rock toward the red scar of a winter torrent, two to leave the mouth of the wash when the first were winded, one to fend the ravine that led up to the broken ridges, one to start out of the scrub at the base of a smooth upward sweep, and, running parallel to it, keep the buck well into the open; all these when their first spurt was done to cross leisurely to new stations to take up another turn. Round they went in the hollow of the crater, velvet-footed and sly even in full chase, and biding their time. It was a good running, but it was almost done when away by the west gap the buck heard the voice of Little Pete raised in adjuration and the friendly blether of the sheep. Thin spirals of dust flared upward from the moving flocks and signalled truce to chase. He broke for it with wide panting bounds and many a missed step picked up with incredible eagerness, the thin rim of his nostrils oozing blood. The coyotes saw and closed in about him, chopping quick and hard. Sharp ears and sharp muzzles cast up at his throat, and were whelmed in a press of gray

flanks. One yelped, one went limping from a kick, and one went past him, returning with a spring upon the heaving shoulder, and the man in the reeds beside the bitter water rose up and fired.

All the luck of that day's hunting went to the homesteader, for he had killed an antelope and a coyote with one shot, and though he had a bad quarter of an hour with a wild and loathly shepherd, who he feared might denounce him to the law, in the end he made off with the last antelope, swung limp and graceless across his shoulder. The coyotes came back to the killing-ground when they had watched him safely down the ravine, and were consoled with what they found. As they pulled the body of the dead leader about before they began upon it, they noticed that the homesteader had taken the ears of that also.

Little Pete lay in the grass and wept simply; the tears made pallid traces in the season's grime. He suffered the torture, the question extraordinary of bereavement. If he had not lingered so long in the meadow of Los Robles, if he had moved faster on the Sand Flat trail—but, in fact, he had come up against the inevitable. He had been breathed upon by that spirit which goes before cities like an exhalation and dries up the gossamer and the dew.

From that day the heart had gone out of the Ceriso. It was a desolate hollow, reddish-hued and dim, with brackish waters, and moreover the feed was poor. His eyes could not forget their trick of roving the valley at

all hours; he looked by the rill of the spring for hoof-prints that were not there.

Fronting the west gap there was a spot where he would not feed, where the grass stood up stiff and black with what had dried upon it. He kept the flocks to the ridgy slopes where the limited horizon permitted one to believe the crater was not quite empty. His heart shook in the night to hear the long-drawn hunting howl, and shook again remembering that he had nothing to be fearing for. After three weeks he passed out on the other side and came that way no more. The juniper-tree stood greenly by the spring until the homesteader cut it down for firewood. Nothing taller than the rattling reeds stirs in all the hollow of the Ceriso.

FRANCIS BRET HARTE

(1838–1902)

For all the rough specimens that appear in the fiction of Bret Harte, he was himself not a self-made man, and his actual contact with life in the Far West was, as years go, brief enough. He was born in Albany; he was brought up on the English classics and his father saw to it that he should study Greek; but his father died, and when his mother remarried and went out to California, Bret Harte joined her there in 1852. He started for Sonora to try his luck in the gold rush, but this was no success, and he became a messenger for the Wells Fargo Express, protecting from attack the safe with gold carried from mining camps to San Francisco. Highwaymen had shot the man just before him; the one just after him they killed. This brief period, lasting scarce more than a year, was the chief inspiration of his life work.

He returned to San Francisco and was editor of the *Golden Era,* to which he contributed "M'liss"; then, in 1866, he became chief editor of the new *Overland Monthly,* where "The Luck of Roaring Camp" brought him instant fame. Four years later he left for the East, and in 1878 entered the consular service, first at Crefeld, then at Glasgow, and afterward lived in England till his death in 1902.

One who tries to select a Bret Harte story for its realistic quality will realize how completely his apparent realism is involved with stage conventions, even those of melodrama. But the life of a young American would be the poorer without these Byronic gamblers and ladies of feline charm, these tough characters whose language improves under emotion, as it does in Dickens, until the approach of the undertaker sets them off into blank verse. He gave us the West of our golden dreams; the "wide open spaces" were his until Merton found them in the movies. "The Luck of Roaring Camp" has too often figured in anthologies for another appearance here; it is one of the stories taken for granted in an American education. But this straightforward record of an ordeal by flood, "High-Water Mark," has the note of authentic experience. If the Dickens lover recognizes his influence in certain paragraphs, this was an influence that few young writers of his day made any effort to escape. In this land of many waters, vast and devastating floods recur often enough to keep this story of the sixties timely. When dams break or levees go down, primitive conditions crash back into our civilization.

HIGH-WATER MARK

From *Tales of the Argonauts*

She lived midway of the great slough of Dedlow Marsh and a good-sized river, which debouched four miles beyond into an estuary formed by the Pacific Ocean, on the long sandy peninsula which constituted the southwestern boundary of a noble bay. The house in which she lived was a small frame cabin raised from the marsh a few feet by stout piles, and was three miles distant from the settlements upon the river. Her husband was a logger,—a profitable business in a country where the principal occupation was the manufacture of lumber.

It was the season of early spring, when her husband left on the ebb of a high tide, with a raft of logs for the usual transportation to the lower end of the bay. As she stood by the door of the little cabin when the voyagers departed she noticed a cold look in the southeastern sky and she remembered hearing her husband say to his companions that they must endeavor to complete their voyage before the coming of the southwesterly gale which he saw brewing. And that night it began to storm and blow harder then she had ever before experienced, and some great trees fell in the forest by the river, and the house rocked like her baby's cradle.

But however the storm might roar about the little cabin, she knew that one she trusted had driven bolt and bar with his own strong hand, and that had he feared for her he would not have left her. This, and her domestic duties, and care of her little sickly baby, helped to keep her mind from dwelling on the weather, except, of course, to hope that he was safely harbored with the logs at Utopia in the dreary distance. But she noticed that day, when she went out to feed the chickens and look after the cow, that the tide was up to the little fence of their garden-patch, and the roar of the surf on the south beach, though miles away, she could hear distinctly. And she began to think that she would like to have someone to talk with about matters, and she believed that if it had not been so far and so stormy, and the trail so impassable, she would have taken the baby and gone over to Ryckman's, her nearest neighbor. But then, you see, he might have returned in the storm, all wet, with no one to see to him; and it was a long exposure for baby, who was croupy and ailing.

But that night, she never could tell why, she didn't feel like sleeping or even lying down. The storm had somewhat abated, but she still "sat and sat," and even tried to read. I don't know whether it was a Bible or some profane magazine that this poor woman read, but most probably the latter, for the words all ran together and made such sad nonsense that she was forced at last to put the book down and turn to that dearer volume which lay before her in the cradle, with

its white initial leaf as yet unsoiled, and try to look forward to its mysterious future. And, rocking the cradle, she thought of everything and everybody, but still was wide awake as ever.

It was nearly twelve o'clock when she at last laid down in her clothes. How long she slept she could not remember, but she awoke with a dreadful choking in her throat, and found herself standing, trembling all over, in the middle of the room, with her baby clasped to her breast, and she was "saying something." The baby cried and sobbed, and she walked up and down trying to hush it, when she heard a scratching at the door. She opened it fearfully, and was glad to see it was only old Pete, their dog, who crawled, dripping with water, into the room. She would like to have looked out, not in the faint hope of her husband's coming, but to see how things looked; but the wind shook the door so savagely that she could hardly hold it. Then she sat down a little while, and then walked up and down a little while, and then she lay down again a little while. Lying close by the wall of the little cabin, she thought she heard once or twice something scrape slowly against the clapboards, like the scraping of branches. Then there was a little gurgling sound, "like the baby made when it was swallowing"; then something went "click-click" and "cluck-cluck," so that she sat up in bed. When she did so she was attracted by something else that seemed creeping from the back door towards the center of the room. It wasn't much wider than her little finger, but

soon it swelled to the width of her hand, and began spreading all over the floor. It was water.

She ran to the front door and threw it open, and saw nothing but water. She ran to the back door and threw it open, and saw nothing but water. She ran to the side window, and, throwing that open, she saw nothing but water. Then she remembered hearing her husband once say that there was no danger in the tide, for that fell regularly, and people could calculate on it, and that he would rather live near the bay than the river, whose banks might overflow at any time. But was it the tide? So she ran again to the back door, and threw out a stick of wood. It drifted away toward the bay. She scooped up some of the water and put it eagerly to her lips. It was fresh and sweet. It was the river, and not the tide!

It was then—O, God be praised for his goodness! she did neither faint nor fall; it was then—blessed be the Saviour for it was his merciful hand that touched and strengthened her in this awful moment—that fear dropped from her like a garment, and her trembling ceased. It was then and thereafter that she never lost her self-command, through all the trials of that gloomy night.

She drew the bedstead towards the middle of the room, and placed a table upon it and on that she put the cradle. The water on the floor was already over her ankles, and the house once or twice moved so perceptibly, and seemed to be racked so, that the closet doors all flew open. Then she heard the same rasping and thump-

ing against the wall, and, looking out, saw that a large uprooted tree, which had lain near the road at the upper end of the pasture, had floated down to the house. Luckily its long roots dragged in the soil and kept it from moving as rapidly as the current, for had it struck the house in its full career, even the strong nails and bolts in the piles could not have withstood the shock. The hound had leaped upon its knotty surface, and crouched near the roots shivering and whining. A ray of hope flashed across her mind. She drew a heavy blanket from the bed, and, wrapping it about the babe, waded in the deepening waters to the door. As the tree swung again, broadside on, making the little cabin creak and tremble, she leaped on to its trunk. By God's mercy she succeeded in obtaining a foothold on its slippery surface, and, twining an arm about its roots, she held in the other her moaning child. Then something cracked near the front porch, and the whole front of the house she had just quitted fell forward,—just as cattle fall on their knees before they lie down,—and at the same moment the great redwood-tree swung round and drifted away with its living cargo into the black night.

For all the excitement and danger, for all her soothing of her crying babe, for all the whistling of the wind, for all the uncertainty of her situation, she still turned to look at the deserted and waterswept cabin. She remembered even then, and she wonders how foolish she was to think of it at that time, that she wished she had put on another dress and the baby's best clothes; and

she kept praying that the house would be spared so that *he*, when he returned, would have something to come to, and it wouldn't be quite so desolate, and—how could he ever know what had become of her and baby? And at the thought she grew sick and faint. But she had something else to do besides worrying, for whenever the long roots of her ark struck an obstacle, the whole trunk made half a revolution, and twice dipped her in the black water. The hound, who kept distracting her by running up and down the tree and howling, at last fell off in one of these collisions. He swam for some time beside her, and she tried to get the poor beast upon the tree, but he "acted silly" and wild, and at last she lost sight of him forever. Then she and her baby were left alone. The light which had burned for a few minutes in the deserted cabin was quenched suddenly. She could not then tell whither she was drifting. The outline of the white dunes on the peninsula showed dimly ahead, and she judged the tree was moving in a line with the river. It must be about slack water, and she had probably reached the eddy formed by the confluence of the tide and the overflowing waters of the river. Unless the tide fell soon, there was present danger of her drifting to the channel, and being carried out to sea or crushed in the floating drift. That peril averted, if she were carried out on the ebb toward the bay, she might hope to strike one of the wooded promontories of the peninsula, and rest till daylight. Sometimes she thought she heard voices and shouts from the river, and the bellowing of

cattle and bleating of sheep. Then again it was only the ringing in her ears and throbbing of her heart. She found at about this time that she was so chilled and stiffened in her cramped position that she could scarcely move, and the baby cried so when she put it to her breast that she noticed the milk refused to flow; and she was so frightened at that, that she put her head under her shawl, and for the first time cried bitterly.

When she raised her head again, the boom of the surf was behind her, and she knew that her ark had again swung round. She dipped up the water to cool her parched throat, and found that it was salt as her tears. There was a relief, though, for by this sign she knew that she was drifting with the tide. It was then the wind went down, and the great and awful silence oppressed her. There was scarcely a ripple against the furrowed sides of the great trunk on which she rested, and around her all was black gloom and quiet. She spoke to the baby just to hear herself speak, and to know that she had not lost her voice. She thought then,—it was queer, but she could not help thinking it,—how awful must have been the night when the great ship swung over the Asiatic peak, and the sounds of creation were blotted from the world. She thought, too, of mariners clinging to spars, and of poor women who were lashed to rafts, and beaten to death by the cruel sea. She tried to thank God that she was thus spared, and lifted her eyes from the baby who had fallen into a fretful sleep. Suddenly, away to the southward, a great light lifted itself out of

the gloom, and flashed and flickered, and flickered and flashed again. Her heart fluttered quickly, against the baby's cold cheek. It was the light house at the entrance to the bay. As she was yet wondering, the tree suddenly rolled a little, dragged a little, and then seemed to lie quiet and still. She put out her hand and the current gurgled against it. The tree was aground, and, by the position of the light and the noise of the surf, aground upon the Dedlow Marsh.

Had it not been for her baby, who was ailing and croupy, had it not been for the sudden drying up of that sensitive fountain, she would have felt safe and relieved. Perhaps it was this which tended to make all her impressions mournful and gloomy. As the tide rapidly fell, a great flock of black brent fluttered by her, screaming and crying. Then the plover flew up and piped mournfully, as they wheeled around the trunk, and at last fearlessly lit upon it like a gray cloud. Then the heron flew over and aroused her, shrieking and protesting, and at last dropped its gaunt legs only a few yards from her. But, strangest of all, a pretty white bird, larger than a dove,—like a pelican, but not a pelican,—circled around and around her. At last it lit upon a rootlet of the tree, quite over her shoulder. She put out her hand and stroked its beautiful white neck, and it never appeared to move. It stayed there so long that she thought she would lift up the baby to see it, and try to attract her attention. But when she did so, the child was so chilled and cold, and had such a blue

look under the little lashes which it didn't raise at all, that she screamed aloud, and the bird flew away, and she fainted.

Well, that was the worst of it, and perhaps it was not so much after all, to any but herself. For when she recovered her senses it was bright sunlight, and dead low water. There was a confused noise of guttural voices about her, and an old squaw, singing an Indian "hushaby," and rocking herself from side to side before a fire built on the marsh, before which she, the recovered wife and mother, lay weak and weary. Her first thought was for her baby, and she was about to speak, when a young squaw, who must have been a mother herself, fathomed her thought, and brought her the "mowitch," pale but living, in such a queer little willow cradle all bound up, just like the squaw's own young one, that she laughed and cried together, and the young squaw and the old squaw showed their big white teeth and glinted their black eyes and said, "Plenty get well, skeena mowitch, wagee man come plenty soon," and she could have kissed their brown faces in her joy. And then she found that they had been gathering berries on the marsh in their queer, conical baskets, and saw the skirt of her gown fluttering on the tree from afar, and the old squaw couldn't resist the temptation of procuring a new garment, and came down and discovered the "wagee" woman and child. And of course she gave the garment to the old squaw, as you may imagine, and when *he* came at last and rushed up to her, looking

about ten years older in his anxiety, she felt so faint again that they had to carry her to the canoe. For, you see, he knew nothing about the flood until he met the Indians at Utopia, and knew by the signs that the poor woman was his wife. And at the next high-tide he towed the tree away back home, although it wasn't worth the trouble, and built another house, using the old tree for the foundation and props, and called it after her, "Mary's Ark!" But you may guess the next house was built above High-water Mark. And that's all.

Not much, perhaps, considering the malevolent capacity of the Dedlow Marsh. But you must tramp over it at low water, or paddle over it at high tide, or get lost in it once or twice in the fog, as I have, to understand properly Mary's adventure, or to appreciate duly the blessings of living beyond High-water Mark.

THE END

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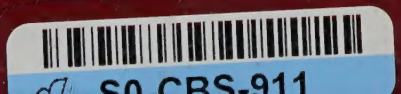
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